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A
HISTORY
OF THE
FLORENTINE REPUBLIC,
AND OF
THE AGE AND RULE
OF
THE MEDICI.

A
HISTORY
OF THE
FLORENTINE REPUBLIC:
AND OF
THE AGE AND RULE
OF
THE MEDICI.

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THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

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TO
THE REV. JAMES M. MATHEWS,
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BY
THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE Author of the following volumes would do injustice to himself, to the design with which the AMERICAN LIBRARY OF HISTORY was originally devised, and to its enterprizing Publishers, if he should allow them to go before the Public without a few words in explanation of the views which have governed him in their compilation and composition. He must therefore briefly observe, that it has not been his desire to weave a pleasant tale "of moving accidents" for the gratification of the reader of anecdote and romance, but to place in familiar style before the inquirer, an outline of the great political struggle of power and right, which, in the formation of the modern governments of Europe, arose between the opposite prin-

ciples, upon one or other of which all governments must be founded and depend. This struggle, it is believed, is principally to be traced, during the five centuries that preceded the discovery of the Western continent, in the origin, progress, and decline of the Florentine Commonwealth ; the only Republic belonging to the middle ages of history. Had the Author, indeed, proposed the less important end of compiling and collecting the romance of Italian history, he would not have chosen the story of a people's government, in which the predominance of the laws must act as a preventive of crime, and, therein, of those tragic incidents which to the careless reader constitute all that is interesting in the annals of nations. The rapid succession of tyrants in the Lombard cities, the crimes which marked their usurpation, their lives, and their deaths—the gallant and adventurous spirit of the Normandic, Gallic, and Saracenic invasions of the South—the misfortunes and the depravity of the Calabrian princes, may furnish matter for a thousand “ tales of wonder and of woe ;” but in Italy, the revolutions of the Tuscan state alone

afford the useful lesson of history,—the solution, namely, of important political problems, and the acquisition of political wisdom.

New-York, }
April, 1833. }

HISTORY

OF THE

FLORENTINE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTORY.

To retrace the progress of nations, and step by step to ascend for their rise to an obscure and fabulous antiquity, was the first care of the early historian, when the pride of a people was to point to its origin, and its glory was made to depend on the remaining trophies of its ancestral achievements. The historian of Florence, however, who writes for a people deriving its national pride from subjects of higher appreciation, must confine his attention to those periods alone which promise him matter of general and instructive application. The alluring topic of Etruscan arts, the disputed question of the early political institutions of Etruria, the disquisitions on the original or aboriginal settlement of her territory ; all these, though interesting in themselves, must be rejected by the mere narrator of Florentine affairs, however speciously they may present themselves to his notice, and urge their claim to a place in the records of the great capital of Tuscany. He will nevertheless find much to atone for this mortifying condition ; and though the Florentine historian may not expatiate on the arrival of the first Pelasgic colonies in Etruria, nor on that primeval race which

sprung from an indigenous Adam,* he may delight in recounting the most interesting events, of contrasted crime and magnanimity, in those dark ages when every political movement was blended with the more interesting relations of social life, and every instance of individual virtue or private indulgence had its manifest influence on the public peace and the national character. But besides, and more than this, there never was a people whose every page of history is adorned like that of the Florentines, with the names that flourish unaffected still by the decline, the decay, and the disgrace, of their country ; there is no nation but Florence whose story is intrinsically connected with the fortunes of men like Dante, Petrarch, Macchiavelli, and the Medici.

The origin of the free governments of Italy may be dated from the era of the memorable accession of the brothers Arcadius and Honorius to the vast dominion and undisputed rule of their father ; for from that date, till the forming of the Lombard league, were fermenting the *discordia semina rerum*, out of which arose the turbulent republics of the middle ages of the world. It becomes, therefore, our duty briefly to review the condition of Tuscany during a portion of this time, that we may have before our mind in the following pages the nature of the democratic principles which we shall find to prevail, as deduced from their causes ; and that we may learn, when we lament their perversion and decline, to ascribe them rather to the combination of circumstances deep rooted at their birth and beyond their control, than to any radical defect which renders them inapplicable under any circumstances and at any time. In this investigation we shall see how soon the little state, extending north and

* " Several recent Italian writers likewise have maintained," says Dunlop, on the authority of Micali and Bossi, " that previous to the arrival of any Lydian or Pelasgic colony, there existed what they term an indigenous population, by which they do not merely signify a population whose origin cannot be traced, since they hint pretty broadly that Etruria had its Adam and Eve as much as Eden."

south about a hundred and twenty miles from the duchy of Modena to the states of the church, and perhaps eighty east and west from the upper to the lower sea, began to exercise an active and efficient influence in the affairs of the peninsula, if not indeed in those of the continent. Scarcely had the far barriers of the Roman state been broken by its barbaric conquerors when this important division of the domestic empire became the prey of each alternate horde, that, pouring through the passes of the Alps, possessed itself of all the northern parts of Italy, and soon extended its authority until it had confined within the first narrow limits of the frugal republic the proud empire which had been but another name for the universe. Goths, Lombards, and Franks, successively invaded it, and established themselves on its ruins; but the uniform system of living among the greater body of the northern race occasioned but little variety in the plan of government to which the Tuscan cities were compelled after their first subjugation to submit. As soon as the Lombard kingdom of Italy became firmly established in that part of the country which has since been known by the name of its rude conquerors, the whole of Tuscany passed into the hands of their military leaders or kings; and the delegated authority of these in the various provinces and cities subdued by them was confided to certain officers, called at first almost indiscriminately counts, marquises, or dukes. The political rights of these vice-regal magistrates were at the time of their creation circumscribed in the extreme; but they themselves were invested immediately with civil and judicial authority to almost an unlimited extent. By degrees the hereditary claim to their incumbencies began to be acknowledged, and very little then remained in the nature of the office to distinguish it from the highest sovereignty, except the nominal dependence which every new magistrate found it his interest to acknowledge to some superior lord. It would be useless to enumerate the early series of dukes

and marquises who exercised this species of sovereignty in Tuscany; their names have hardly found a place in history, and the events which occurred beneath their rule may be summed up in a barren catalogue of marches, battles, and retreats, with no political results, and more or less frequent as the fortunes of the Lombard kings required the service of their feudatories. Each city was generally governed by its duke; and the most powerful assumed the higher title, and enjoyed the greater prerogatives of marquis of Tuscany.

The proper history of this country commences with the reign of Charlemagne, or rather with the division of his empire among his sons. At this period her annals will begin, if not gloriously for the importance of her achievements, yet in a manner illustrious, from the families which, springing from her sovereigns, yet flourish with splendour and power undiminished by ten centuries, over the greatest countries of Europe. The principal city of Tuscany at that time was Lucca, where the Lombard kings had often made their residence, and which was for the most part the capital of the marquises of Tuscany. As count of Lucca, the Bavarian Boniface was incontestibly the greatest of the minor sovereigns who then divided the governments north of the Tiber. To this title, his son, named also Boniface, superadded that of duke of Tuscany, and first extended the name of his little territory beyond the natural limits which separate, and seem as if intended to protect, one undivided people from the world. The successor of Charlemagne, to whose weakness he was as faithful as he would have been to the dazzling fame of his father, had appointed him to the government of the islands of Sardinia and Corsica. These, as well as all the coast of Italy, were then infested by the enterprising bands of Saracens, who, as national enemies at one time, and as common pirates at another, were continually harassing their christian neighbours along the wide borders of the Mediterranean. But it was

not sufficient for Boniface to expel these unwelcome visitors from the seas submitted to his charge. He collected a little fleet in the harbour of Pisa, and resolved upon giving the Saracens such proofs of his valour as should effectually deter them from repeating their devastating incursions. After freeing the Tuscan sea from their depredations, and liberating the almost continually blockaded coasts of the larger islands, he steered directly for Africa, and, landing between the sites of Carthage and Utica, challenged the whole force of the Saracens. Unaccustomed to such an intrusion, and habituated to look upon the weak children of Italy as their proper prey by right of greater daring, the Saracens poured out in overwhelming numbers; solicitous, perhaps, rather for the division of the spoil than for the possible result, or from a belief that so formidable an array as that which they displayed against Boniface would be required for his discomfiture. They made, notwithstanding, with their collected force an impetuous attack; but the Florentines, undaunted by their array, remained unmoved by the impetuosity of their shock. Four times the infuriated Mussulmans returned to the conflict; but the resolute christians, after the fifth assault, appeared still ready for a sixth onset, and almost undiminished in numbers; while the Saracens, exhausted and reduced, beheld themselves now no longer actuated by the spirit of attack, nor provided even with the vigour for defence. They made therefore a precipitate retreat, or rather a disorderly flight over the country; and Boniface, having thus struck terror into the scourge of his christian countrymen and allies, returned richly laden with booty, to enjoy in increased reputation the fruits of his well devised and boldly executed campaign.

New troubles, however, awaited his return, and the part which he bore in them, together with the resolution and gallantry with which he performed it, gave to the Tuscan name a weight in the European courts

which even the brilliancy of his recent exploit would have failed to secure for it. Lewis the Pious had married Judith of Bavaria, who, like Boniface, may claim to be considered as one of the founders of the great family of the Guelphs. This woman, of a spirit and intellect superior to those of her husband, became early offensive to his insubordinate children, who exercised an unlimited control over the actions and will of their father. After much persuasion, and most probably by means less warrantable, they succeeded in prevailing on his imbecility to abdicate in their favour. The first consequence of this imprudent measure was a forcible separation from his wife. The unfortunate woman was torn from the arms of her husband and cast into a dungeon, while all power passed for a season into the hands of Lothair, the hair-brained king of Italy. But the weakness of Lewis had not yet entirely eradicated the respect which his subjects had borne to the memory of his father, and the cruelty thus exercised against the consort of Charlemagne's son and successor, gave a new impulse to their sympathies in his behalf. Boniface, exclaiming that he wielded the sword in conformity with that duty which bound every honest knight to the defence of the gentler sex, declared in her favour, and appearing with a few adherents before the castle in which she was confined, he succeeded in restoring the queen of France to her husband, himself just re-exalted to his ancient dignity.

This affair was of the highest influence in fixing the standard of the Tuscan state and name, and the proud kingdom of the Franks could hardly rate itself above the marquisate which had confirmed its sovereignty by giving it a queen. Yet the result was for a time disastrous to Boniface; for the king of Italy resolving to satisfy his revenge, since foiled in his ambition, expelled the duke from his country, and drove him to seek an asylum in France as the fruit and reward of his devotion to her interests. It seems, however,

that after some years of banishment he returned to his proper dominions, and died in the exercise of that authority which he had first made respectable in the eyes of greater potentates. The undistinguished reign of his son Adalbert succeeded ; after which the ducal ensigns passed into the hands of his heir, called by Sigonius, Adalbert the Rich, and by others, perhaps with a species of irony, Adalbert the Great.

At the time of his accession had commenced the contest for the iron crown of Italy, which continued for so many years, and out of which arose at last the republican institutions that subsequently distinguished all the upper districts of Italy. Of course the prominent candidates, Lambert and Berenger, directed their care to conciliate or overawe the powerful interest of the Tuscan duke. At the instigation of his wife, by whose ambition he was directed in all his alliances, and who kept him incessantly embroiled with his feudal lords, the kings of Italy, he espoused the cause of Berenger, and collecting all his force, prepared to meet his sovereign in one decisive engagement. The consequence was such as might have been anticipated from the improvidence of one party, and the skill and activity of the other. Duke Adalbert was led from a miserable stable in which he had sought safety into the presence of his conqueror. "I have verified the prediction of your wife," said the victorious prince, and ordered his captive to be placed in the security of a castle that might pass for a prison. This taunt alluded to the declaration of Bertha, which that haughty woman had publicly made, that she would convert her husband into "a king or a jackass;" and it is to be believed that this ill-judging leader had not been without the hope of gracing his own head in the midst of these conflicts with the regal crown. The death of Lambert, who had given the richest promise to Italy, released his prisoner, when Berenger, to whose party he had originally attached himself, ascended the throne

which the demise of Lambert had left without an occupant. The restless spirit of Bertha was still to prepare new toils for her husband, and, moved by her entreaties, a short time after he had received his liberation through Berenger, he renounced his allegiance, and assembled his forces against him in the name and under the banners of Lewis of Provence. Created emperor by the pope, and aided by the fickle Adalbert, this crafty politician, after various difficulties, beheld himself unquestioned master of the Italian throne. But the king-making prerogative was still enjoyed by the lord of Tuscany, and an injudicious expression of wonder or dissatisfaction at the display of ducal pomp was soon to dispossess the new monarch of his crown. The jealous fears of Bertha were alarmed, and all the industry of Adalbert, directed by her genius for intrigue, was exercised to undermine his credit with the princes of Italy. In this it was not difficult to succeed, as the Italians could be supposed to entertain but little personal regard for those different claimants to the sovereignty over their property and persons. Availing himself of the discontent thus excited against Lewis, and encouraged by the general sentiment, Berenger again appeared a competitor for the crown, and received it again from the hands of his subjects. On his death he was succeeded by Rudolph of Burgundy, who, after an undisputed reign of two years, was himself to experience the little fealty of the Italians, and the instability of the power which had placed him on the throne.

It is impossible to observe the frequent changes which thus occurred in the administration of the Italian government, without suspecting for them some cause apart from those which appear in the records of contemporary historians. That cause will be found to consist in the nature of its dependencies, or, in other words, in the peculiar modifications of the feudal system throughout the Italian states. We shall not discuss the nature of

these institutions in general ; but a few remarks on those peculiar traits by which their progress was characterized in Italy are necessary to the due appreciation of her early condition. From them we shall discover the true cause of her varieties of interests, the instability of her throne, and the origin of her frequent dissensions and sectional enmities. But, as amends for these, we shall also mark the origin of her republican spirit, which made of every city an independent state, and a democrat of every citizen, while yet the right divine of kings was elsewhere as undisputed as the divinity from which it was presumed to flow. A few ages of tumultuous liberty may indeed appear to some a theme of small congratulation to a people in whose ruins it now lies interred ; but reflection will assuredly inform the inquirer, that the confederate republics of America are the no more certain fruits of magna charta and the reformation, than that confederacy and the great charter itself are the genuine and glorious offspring of the early wars in which Asia yielded to Europe, the extension of the Roman empire, and the republics of Italy.

The government which the Lombards established in all their conquered provinces has been heretofore explained ; and so far the introduction of the political feuds or tenures into Italy corresponded to those of other countries subject to the same harsh necessity. But it was in the subinfeudation of her territory that the first peculiarity of her system was made manifest. Obedience on the part of the highest feudatories to their superiors or lords paramount came very soon to be a tribute extorted, rather than spontaneously paid ; and the only security of the Lombard kings, and their successors of every nation, was in the superior force with which they were able to exact the performance of the feudal services. Hence it was that the barons were also obliged to maintain a reputable force for their own defence or protection, and not in conformity with their

duty to the sovereign. When therefore a first vassal of the crown, as happened in almost every instance, possessed within his fief a number of smaller cities, towns, or fortresses, he found himself constrained to place their government in the hands of his various dependents, on conditions resembling those by which he held his own possessions of the king. If then the example of insubordination was once given by the high baron, he was certain of having it followed by his inferior towards himself; so that when the whole system fell in the time of the Frederics, it was hardly possible to find a village or a castle that did not feel at liberty to offer itself as an independent power to the league. The kings of Italy perceived their interest in encouraging that spirit of independence in the lower nobility which they could not repress in those of greater rank; and, still further to reduce the strength of their dangerous servants, they contrived under various pretences to lessen the value of their fiefs by reclaiming now a fortress, and now a tract of country, as occasion presented itself, or as jealousy prevailed over justice and right. In the places thus gained from their barons, the Italian kings put their more trusted adherents, and pretended to recognize, in those of most restricted means, and whose castle-walls frequently bounded their power, the titles and prerogatives of such as possessed in their governments respectable cities and a large population. This was obviously a transitory state of things, adapted only to the institutions in which it originated, and preparatory to a fundamental change in the political system. Accordingly it failed as Italy became republican. The factions, however, arising out of personal differences and family antipathies, which desolated the Italian states during the years of their freedom, bore witness how radically the effects of the feudal policy had insinuated themselves into the Italian character.

In the midst of the changes for which we have thus

endeavoured to account, the death of Adalbert made way for the accession of his son, who, by the name of duke Guido, inherited his power and much of the weakness of his disposition. To strengthen his authority he had not hesitated to connect himself in marriage with Marozia, the most remarkable, but at the same time the most infamous, character of her age. History records no stronger instance of a powerful intellect in a female compensating the want of all a female's modesty, with a recklessness of moral principle which astonishes almost too much to shock us. She had been wife of the duke of Spoleto, but on his death removed to Rome, and made herself there dispenser of all gifts, spiritual and temporal, without exception of the papacy itself. Pope John IX. had been exalted unworthily indeed, and by the most corrupt devices and influence, to the chair of St. Peter; yet we may easily persuade ourselves that had he been raised by the united voice of devout admiration to that seat, he would have found little protection in his sanctity from the resolute ferocity of Marozia. He was by her order arrested on his throne, and the sentence of his ruthless enemy was pronounced for his death. But the dethronement of a pope was of little avail to his persecutress, unless she could replace him by one in her interest. She boldly, therefore, advanced the pretensions of her illegitimate son, by pope Sergius, to the sacred dignity of his dissolute father. Her claims were allowed, and the natural son of this courtesan became the father of the christian church, and received, with the name of John XI. a title indicative of little less than the adoration which religion pays to the true object of its reverence. Nor was this infamous marriage the only means resorted to by the Tuscan court to secure and extend its authority. By a former marriage the mother of Guido was also the mother of Hugh, or, as he was called by the Italians, Ugone of Provence; to this young and enterprising prince it

was resolved to offer the kingdom of Italy. All the rulers of the large cities pledged themselves to his interest, and, being recognized by the envoys of the pope, he made his entrance into Milan, where he received the crown from the metropolitan Lambert.

The Italians had now given themselves a king very unlike those whom they had formerly found it easy to put aside at their pleasure. The same waywardness which had governed them before, distinguished them also in regard to their newly chosen sovereign. Being dissatisfied with his arbitrary administration, several powerful individuals conspired to effect his deposition; but the discovery of the conspiracy, and the death of its promoters, were calculated to repress this spirit of revolt, which success had, until the reign of Ugone, made common among the Italians.

The craft of this monarch was equalled by his relentless and resolute daring; and no compunctious visitings appear at any moment to have disturbed the execution of his plans. To the Bavarian house of Tuscany he had owed his elevation; but the power which had been manifested in thus changing a dynasty, was a check and a terror to the king; nor did he forget that in the reign of Guido's predecessors the crown of Lombard Italy had been in every sense but in name the transferable property of its nominal dependent. In the lifetime of Guido, however, not a pretext presented itself, and the views of the royal ambition were carefully concealed. Fortunately for its projects, the character of Guido was but ill adapted to the disposition of his wife; and his death, which occurred A. D. 931, was by no means without suspicion of poison administered to him by his abandoned consort. His brother Lambert assumed, as next in succession, the ducal sway, and was not unwilling to add to his other titles that most dishonourable one of husband to Marozia. An accession of influence to the already suspected house of Bavaria could not but excite the

misgivings of Ugone, and the marriage of Lambert and Marozia was consequently viewed by him with suspicion and dislike. But his plans were ripening ; the fall of Lambert was prepared, and with it the expulsion of the Bavarian line from Tuscany.

The king of Italy, with the little reliance which he could place on his barons, would have attacked, with less than equal chance, his Tuscan vassal in the field. It was necessary then to lower him in the eyes of his subjects, and to deprive him of that respect and awe which centered in the name and character of a sovereign. He publicly declared that neither Guido nor Lambert had just claims to the ducal sceptre ; that they were not the children of Adalbert, but the spurious offspring of an adulterous bed ; or that Bertha, at least, for state purposes, had presented them to that prince as his children, though they were altogether foreign to his blood. The nice and critical examination of evidence in matters of disputed fact was then a thing unheard of and unknown ; but the spirit of the age provided another, and, as it must have seemed, a nobler means of justification, while the ignorance of all classes may have looked upon it as more clearly declaratory of the right. Full of the chivalric feeling of the times, duke Lambert appealed to the judgment of God, and offered to peril his life and his honour on his prowess in the lists. The challenge was accepted, and the strength of Lambert prevailed ; or, according to the interpretation of the issue in the language of his day, the justice of God made itself heard in his behalf. The king of Lombardy was too secure of his power, however, to be thus beaten from his ground. He knew that the taint with which he had affected the moral influence of his enemy was not to be removed, and, in violation of the tacit pledge which he had given in accepting the battle of Lambert, he declared him a pretender to the blood and rank of Adalbert, proclaiming his own brother Bosone duke and lord of Tuscany. It

was then no difficult matter to effect the overthrow of the bold but improvident heir of Adalbert. He was taken prisoner, and the ambition of the king being now replaced by jealousy and hate, he ordered that the eyes of his captive should be plucked out, that he might no longer dread his interest with the Tuscans, nor his personal valour and prowess in the field. With his catastrophe ended the Bavarian line of Boniface in Tuscany.

For a short period we have no concern in the history of the enormities of the king of Italy; they belong rather to the history of Rome, whither, after having married the now declining, but still dissolute, Marozia, he removed; and where his insolence occasioned a gleam of liberty in the famous revolution of Alberic. But returning on the occurrence of that event to his proper dominion, he again caused Tuscany to feel the influence of his power. Having dethroned his brother Bosone, he superseded him by his own son Lothair, whom he soon after withdrew, and nominated another, the illegitimate Oberto, in his stead. Among the least remarkable of all the Tuscan princes were these sons of Ugone, distinguished as their father was alike for talent, intrepidity, and crime. Nor can much be related of their successor Ugone, miscalled for the *bigoted*, the *great*. Yet the character of Tuscan policy, if indeed Tuscany can be said as yet to have adopted any principle of policy, appears to have been materially affected in his reign; and the uniform attachment of the Florentines to the papal interest may possibly be dated from the era of the accession of Ugone. Without enumerating the churches that he founded and the abbeys that he built, we will introduce from Villani an account of his first conversion to virtue, as illustrative no less of the superstition of the times than of the readiness of the duke to acknowledge the efficacy of a holy life led in the trammels of the church. Hence probably the favourable notice which has reached us of his character and his life. "With Otho III." says the

early historian of Florence, "arrived in Italy the marquis Ugo, whom I suspect to have been of Brandenburg.* So delighted was he with his residence in Tuscany, and more especially with our city of Florence, that, causing his family to join him, he fixed his abode in that city as vicar of the emperor. It happened, as it pleased Heaven, that hunting one day in the forests of Bonsollazzo he became separated from his attendants, and wandering about, arrived at last at a place in which he beheld many persons engaged as in the labours of the forge. But upon examination, he perceived that, instead of working in iron, there were a black and hideous race of ill-formed beings, torturing with fire and huge hammers of steel a great number of men. He ventured to inquire the meaning, and was told that the men whom he saw were the souls of the damned, and that a very radical change of life would be required to save the Tuscan marquis Ugone from the infliction of similar torments. Ugone commended himself to the Virgin, and returning to Florence, he ordered all his German possessions to be sold, and seven abbeys to be constructed with the proceeds of the sale. In one of these, which he caused to be erected in Florence in honour of St. Mary, it was the custom to celebrate, in an annual oration, the praises of this devout and liberal benefactor."

"Ὡς διγ ἀμφιεπον ταφον Ἐκτορος ἱπποδαμοιο."

In this account by Villani, we are called to remark especially, that Florence is here for the first time indicated as the residence of the chief of the province of Tuscany; and secondly, that it is more than probable that this Ugone did not succeed to Oberto as marquis or duke, but rather as imperial overseer of that feudatory of the empire. With Oberto, however, or with Ugone, the race of the king of Italy, which had at-

* Nevertheless, Pignotti says he was the last male heir of the house of Provence.

tained to sovereign power in Tuscany, was extinguished in that valuable fief, only three years, or little longer, after it had succeeded in expelling the ancient and honourable house of Boniface. The general historians of Tuscany place in succession to Ugone the marquis Tedaldo; but it is more than probable that he was, like his predecessor, an imperial officer, with powers of supervision over the native prince. He was, it is thought, a lord of Modena. After a rapid succession of undistinguished princes who held the ducal sceptre from this time, another Boniface assumed its guidance and governance. During the rule of Tedaldo, the oppressive and disgraceful reign of the tyrant Ugone was happily brought to a close, and his son Lothair succeeded, till the greater talent or less scrupulous conscience of Berenger, marquis of Ivrea, secured to him the long-contested crown.

Meanwhile the greatest changes had been going on in Italy. The three Othos had established there the German interest, and the kingdom was no longer to exercise an influence over its feudatories, apart from the Empire. These changes were the last and most considerable among the causes that conspired to build up the republics of the age that succeeded. The actions of Boniface display nothing of the character required by the exigencies of the times. The quarrels of the pope and the emperor were preparing during his reign; the partizan spirit of the princes of Italy was kindling, and all the elements of a great revolution were at work and in conflict; but the duke of Tuscany, the greatest of the subordinate chiefs, was ignorant of the crisis, and as unprepared for its results as though he had no concern in its direction. Accordingly, it burst a few years afterwards, and the preponderance of the papal influence in Tuscany was the first and the bitter fruit of his neglect. The baleful consequence of this ascendancy was well prophesied by Dante, and the ruin of Italy has verified his predic-

non. Boniface satisfied, however, the requisitions of the church, and the policy of its ministers points to the marks of the scourge upon his flesh, and descants on his piety and devotion to the best interests of humanity. His widow, though the mother of three children, was yet held an equal match for a monarch; of such importance was a voice in the control of the Tuscan government. With a view to this advantage, a host of suitors appeared for the hand of Beatrice, and Godfrey of Lorraine was chosen to supply the place of a father to the heirs of Boniface, inheritors of the fairest portion of Italy. In addition to his own marriage, which was consummated with the greatest secrecy, Godfrey concluded with Beatrice an agreement that her daughter Matilda and his son, called also Godfrey, and surnamed the hunch-back, should, at a proper age, confirm by their union the alliance of the families.

When this connexion became known to the emperor, he felt at once the important results to his own power as well as to that of the church. The interference of the Tuscan princes in the affairs of the Empire within the Alps had always been a cause of alarm and vexation to the imperial government; and the emperor had received already pregnant proof of the disaffection of the house of Lorraine. To destroy, then, in some measure, the effect of this ill-boding union, he endeavoured to get possession of the person of Beatrice; and, succeeding in this, he was certain of no molestation from Godfrey, at least on the side of Tuscany, his power in that district being entirely dependent on the subtle management of his wife. Meanwhile the death of her brother and that of her sister, about the same time, left the countess Matilda sole heiress to the marquisate of Tuscany, of Mantua, of Ferrara, and of all her maternal rights, in addition to those which descended to her from her father, in Italy. The death of Henry III. and the accession of his son, restored the independence of Tuscany by the release of Beatrice,

and every thing promised, for a time, success to the plans of the ambitious consorts. Frederick, the brother of Godfrey, was elected to fill the papal chair on the demise of Victor II. and gave by his elevation to that dignity a new colour to the hopes of his brother. His early death, however, threw a cloud over the prospects of the duke, which from that period declined in Italy, till he was glad to retire to his original possessions in Lorraine.

We have now, with that brevity which the subject would allow, conducted the reader to an era, which, separating the history of Tuscany from that of the Empire, must prepare him for the establishment of its own innumerable governments. The incidents with which this epoch in her history commences are various and striking, and connect the name of her sovereign with the most important events in the chronicles of the middle ages. With her aid, the temporalities for which the church had so long and so resolutely contended, were secured to the hierarchy; and by her example the cities of Italy were taught the possibility of resisting the vast powers and resources of the Empire. We shall find it, ourselves, difficult to judge, even with all the circumstances before us, of the wisdom or patriotism of that choice which preferred a domestic tyrant, with the added authority of a spiritual command, to a foreign oppressor with an irresistible military force; but this was indisputably the alternative proposed to the Italian states in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries. In adhering to the pope, the Italians preserved to themselves, at least that dignity of freedom which acknowledges not a sovereign, and which does not willingly bend to a master. This may not be, indeed, the most valuable attribute of liberty, for its enjoyment, but it is, as certainly, the first ingredient, and indispensable for the preservation and appreciation of the rest.

Whatever reasonable hopes might have been enter-

tained by the duke of Lorraine in contracting his son to the daughter of Beatrice, those hopes were not even to be apparently, or for a moment, realized. Matilda and her mother inclined early to the interest of the pope; and as the hunch-backed Godfrey espoused the quarrel of the emperor, he was not allowed to take so much part in the government as to affix his name to the public ordinances of the realm. If, however, Matilda early manifested a decided predilection for the pope, that predilection may be thought sincere by which her interest was so manifestly promoted. The valour, the wealth, and the reputation of the Tuscan dukes had long rendered them independent, in fact, of all superior claims; but there still existed in the nature of their tenure all the feudal obligations, and on the part of the emperors, all the feudal rights. If these had lain unused for a period, there was the greater reason to suspect that the earliest opportunity would be seized to assert them, and to humble the pretensions of the vassal by whom they had been disregarded. The failure of the male line of the last Boniface appeared to present this opportunity; inasmuch as that provision of the law which denied the female succession, afforded a pretext to the emperor for exercising his right of withholding his sanction to the occupation of the ducal throne by Matilda. In this situation that princess had but the alternative of purchasing anew, from the emperor, the patrimonial estate, or of inviting the protection of the pope by throwing the whole influence of her resistance to the Empire into his party. The former would have cost her new and unbounded concessions, depriving, probably, of all its superiority, the rule of the Tuscan dukes, and the power of the Tuscan name.

Gregory VII. then occupied the pontifical seat, and the arrogance of his pretensions might have weakened the respect for his office had they been less boldly or less fearlessly advanced. His predecessors had covet-

ed the right of investiture, and when occasion presented itself they had never failed to insinuate a claim to that valuable prerogative. But Gregory had prepared other weapons than remonstrance and entreaty for this fight. He urged that the spiritual governance of the church was but a mockery while laymen exercised the right of filling all its offices by preferment to ecclesiastical benefices; and when the holiness of his office had gained the double respect of mankind, from the sanctity of his life, he declared that sacred office in danger from the violent usurpation of its enemies. The thunders of the interdict and of excommunication, which his predecessors had trembled to use, were familiar to his hand; and the people, in whose fidelity consisted the strength of the empire, were satisfied as to his superior authority, by the power of whose word they saw themselves deprived of the consolations of those rites with which human nature in every nation, under various forms, has quieted its last fears or satisfied its last vanity. The day is not yet come in which mankind can contemplate with philosophy a deserted bed of death, and a sepulture without the funeral offices. Ambitious, learned, resolute, and bold; skilful in the government of men's minds, and undaunted by their opposition, Gregory applied the whole energy of his vigorous character to the consolidation of certain temporal rights that appeared to him necessary for the proper support of the ecclesiastical dignity: he used for this purpose unsparingly the spiritual weapons of censure and excommunication, and considered that nothing was done towards the accomplishment of his designs while one potentate remained restive under his control. To this pontiff Matilda resolved to attach herself; and he was well aware of the importance of winning from the refractory emperor his most powerful support in Italy, and of securing to himself the obedience of so influential a dependent. Gregory, therefore, as claiming to be lord paramount, and as con-

ferring even the imperial honours, pretended a right to invest, with all the properties of a feudatory, the true lieges of the Empire ; and Matilda was confirmed by his authority in her inheritance. About the same time she was freed from even that shadow of restraint which the feeble influence of a husband, who had never been permitted to enjoy even the connubial rights, might be supposed to exercise over the spirit of a haughty queen ; and the almost simultaneous decease of her mother left her sole mistress of her now well-secured patrimony.

In the same year, 1076, broke out the first open quarrel between Gregory and the emperor Henry IV. This is that difference which first brought the imperial power into subjection to the pope ; when Gregory, placing his foot on the neck of the prostrate sovereign, and thus vindicating his supremacy, half gave him back his crown. This temporary arrangement of their difficulties led to no permanent peace between Henry and the pope ; and when the emperor entered on his march to curb the insolence of the hierarchy, in the walls of its sacred abode, the territory of Matilda, as an adherent of the church, became the scene of his first devastation. The city of Lucca, still the first in Tuscany, was excited to rebel ; and the countess was compelled to abandon her capital, and secure herself in one of those strong holds or fortified castles with which feudal jealousy had studded her realm. The fortune of war was not, however, always against her ; and the deficiency of personal strength that kept her from the field, in which a duke of Tuscany might have distinguished himself, was atoned for by the masculine vigour of her mind. The social virtues, during the long period known by the name of the dark ages, were but little cultivated and esteemed. Valour, strength, and truth, formed the best characteristics of manly virtue ; and youth and beauty, the allurements of female attractions. Secluded in her virgin state, the gentle exer-

cise of the many qualities which now give promise of the prudent and virtuous matron, in the maid, found rare occasion of display. When, therefore, a matrimonial connexion was formed between a knight and a lady possessing neither youth nor beauty, it differed very little from the intercourse and companionship which took place between men associated by a community of interests and a coincidence of opinions. In this light, though neither beautiful nor young, Matilda was still an object of solicitous courtship beyond the most attractive females of her day ; and when duke Guelph, the Bavarian, obtained her hand, he triumphed over competitors allured by the report of her power from all quarters of the earth. Among these was Robert, the son of that William of Normandy who became afterwards the Conqueror.

In this alliance, no ardour of affection was felt or feigned on either side ; but both were hostile to the emperor, and both expected to increase their separately insufficient strength by their united energies and force. The possessions of Matilda were also secured in reversion to Guelph by the matrimonial contract, and the title of duke of Tuscany was consequently to pass again into the house of Bavaria. This union, the object of which was comprehended immediately by the emperor, was the signal of new wars. Henry marched an army into Lorraine against the possessions which Matilda held there from her mother ; and then turning into Italy, threatened the desolation of Tuscany. The power of the Empire was felt to be too overwhelming for the means of defence which the Tuscan sovereigns could offer in the field ; but no revolting violation of the ties of nature seemed unworthy to be used against their dreaded enemy, in lieu of arms and of a combat that must prove unequal. The apparent heir of Henry, Conrad, his son, was allured by an offer of the crown of Italy ; at the same time hints were given to him that the period of expectation for the im-

perial diadem might also be shortened. Accordingly he presented himself as a candidate for the regal crown, yet worn by his father, and Urban saw no reason to refuse it to a rebellious and unnatural son. Conrad was therefore declared king, and on his coronation formally abandoned to the pope the hard contested question of investitures. But the spirit of the emperor was not broken by this blow, nor was the ingenious cruelty of Matilda satisfied. The most disgusting calumnies were propagated concerning his conduct in domestic life, and in his matrimonial relations; and his wife was weakly gained to abandon her husband, and accuse him before his enemies in a council of two hundred bishops and thirty thousand laymen, presided over by his enemy, the sovereign pontiff in person. On the other hand, Henry declared that the revolt of Conrad had deprived him of his claim to the throne of Italy and to the Empire; proclaiming in his stead another son, Henry, king of Italy, and heir to the imperial crown. But the insinuating malice of Rome had anticipated him even here; and this son, whose filial piety he had just been about to reward, was willing rather to accept in anticipation the titles of his father from the hands of his persecutors, than to share them with him as a voluntary gift and a mark of paternal affection. Henry sunk under these accumulated mortifications and sorrows; and after having been from the commencement almost of his reign, which dated from the year 1057, till the moment of his death in 1106, engaged not unsuccessfully against the power of the church sustained by all the thunders of the then unquestioned authority of its vicariate, he died broken-hearted, and careless of all for which he had so long and so resolutely contended, without the regret of his subjects, and an object of reprobation in the eyes of half the world besides. His last words to the friends who surrounded his bed during the closing hours of his eventful life, seem to breathe all the humi-

lity of a contrite spirit, or the resignation, it may be, of a broken heart. *Miseremini mei vos saltem amici mei, quia manus Domini tetigit me.* Thus closed the life of the firm opponent of ecclesiastical supremacy, and the death of his adversary was hardly more glorious. But Matilda, whose territory had been the field of combat for these sanguinary combatants, whose treasure had been wasted in the wars, whose cities had been excited to rebel or destroyed for their fidelity, remained, upon their deaths, with undiminished power and a vastly extended reputation for conduct and courage.

The crown of Italy had constituted, perhaps, the ulterior object of her desires ; and the deposition of the unworthy Conrad formed the first step in the progress of her hopes. But the claims of Henry V. were of a different character. As he was too powerfully supported to leave Matilda a reasonable prospect of success in opposition, she prudently addressed her care to the management of the new prince by treaty and a forced neutrality. Yet Italy beheld again, on the accession of this king, her cultivated fields laid waste, and her beautiful cities in ruins. The same plan of conciliation was affected by the pope ; but the question of investitures was still the dear object of ambition on one hand, and of jealous suspicion on the other ; and the recusant Henry, when he should have received the title of emperor from the pope, was to renounce, as he assumed the insignia of the Empire, the long contested right. The coronation ceremony resulted in a tumult ; and if Henry could not receive in Rome the crown of his fathers, he bore with him a prisoner the then reigning pope Paschal II. to place it on his head in his own palace, and as an inherited property, which the pope could neither give nor withhold.

About the same time a rupture took place between Matilda and her husband, which quickly led to their separation ; throwing the weight of the Bavarian interest into the scale of the emperor. During the reign

of Henry IV. and while the terror of his arms was continually hanging over the Tuscan court, it had never been hinted to Guelph that any thing was intended, by his wife, in opposition to the marriage contract, by which the reversion of her large possessions had been secured to his family. On the demise, however, of her obstinate enemy, her husband was allowed to discover that, so long before their union as the year 1077, a reversionary transfer of all her property had been executed by Matilda to the pope. The desertion of the papal cause by Guelph and his father on this annunciation, sufficiently declare how bitterly unexpected was the discovery. A divorce, on this ground, restored the countess a second time to a fuller liberty, and bound her more closely to the church.

In all her transactions, the courage, skill, and perseverance of Matilda had excited the admiration of the world. Her's were transcendant merits for a throne; and Henry was not least sensible of their value, nor most solicitous concerning the female characteristics which she wanted. He desired to see her, and to settle the difference which had existed between them; and as Matilda did not think proper to abandon the safe shelter of the fortress in which she had secured herself, he condescended to visit her in her castle of Bibbianello, in which he was received with the greatest pomp and the most courtly attention. It is said that the countess amazed him, during the three days that he enjoyed her hospitality, by a display of knowledge and ability; conversing with him in his own language without an interpreter. Whether "these only were the witchcrafts that she used," or whether she exerted against him other arts, in the exercise of which she had been always successful before, it is certain that at his departure he confirmed her in all the privileges which she enjoyed, and to which the royal sanction had not yet been formally given; adding the regency, and perhaps the viceregal authority in his

Lombard dominions, to all her former proper titles of command. This accomplished and truly wonderful woman, having gained a reputation for all the qualities required for sovereignty, died 1116, in the midst of her power ; a power which she had elevated to the highest pitch, and which, in the difficult crisis that followed, enabled the Tuscan confederacy to withstand the collective force of the Empire. On her death, her vast possessions were to pass by her testament to the church ; and though the rising spirit of the age was not favourable to these unauthorized transfers of a people, yet the great majority of the Tuseans were sufficiently well disposed towards the pope ; and the magnificent mausoleum that records in St. Peter's the piety of the countess, was meant less, perhaps, as a memorial of the gift than as a splendid reward of munificent and exemplary devotion.

We have so far endeavoured to describe the general state of Italy, and more particularly of Tuscany, conducing to the rise of the Florentine republic.

At the earliest dates, nearest the period of its origin, the Villa Arnina was intended but as the port or market of Fiesole, when Florence had no other name in the geography of Etruria. It stood between the right bank of the Arno and the foot of the hill on which the parent town had been erected. "In the second triumvirate, however," says Macchiavelli, "this new establishment was so well stocked with population as to claim a place among the cities of Italy." Still it was of comparatively little note when the army of Totila reduced it to ashes in his triumphant march towards the capital of the world. Yet Villani writes it was then powerful and strong, and that the Gothic king could only obtain possession of it by false promises and fraud ; the citizens having repelled all his attacks when by force he would have wreaked his vengeance upon them for the discomfiture and death of Radagasius the Goth, long before conquered and slain by the Floren-

times. The history of this capture of the city, so unimportant to posterity, appeared, in the days of her first historian, an interesting reminiscence of her primeval glories; and, after expatiating on the obstinacy and valour of her resistance, he may be excused, if he found, in the frank confidence with which she opened her gates, on the faith of an enemy, the origin of a current reproach by which the Florentines were distinguished in his day.* Fiesole, however, fared less fatally; both were destroyed at the command of Totila, but the elder city was rebuilt by his authority upon its former site, with an avowed hostility to Florence, and to the end that that city might never more rise from its ashes. Nor does it appear without reason, if we may rely on Villani, that the barbarians were thus lenient to the people of Fiesole; for, in all the subsequent invasions of the Empire, the Fiesolani were invariably rebels to the emperors, and favourers and aids to the savages of the north. "To their hostility it was," says he, "that Florence, after her destruction by Totila, remained thus desolate and in ruins, for upwards of three hundred years, till God was pleased to put an end to her adversities in the time of the Good Charlemagne, king of France and emperor of Rome."

The order for the rebuilding of Florence was issued by its imperial lord, not in the limited sense of reconstructing its edifices; Florence was to be again the re-

* Forsyth, in his "Remarks," observes in a note, that "the Florentines themselves account for their nickname *ciechi*, (blind,) by the whiteness of their houses, which blinds so many of their inhabitants; but the other Tuscans contend that the epithet of *blind*, applied nationally to Florence, should mean what it meant at Chalcedon." Dante applies the same epithet to his fellow-citizens as of ancient report, and his commentators have given such interpretations of his lines as the various incidents of Florentine history will allow. It is, however, generally supposed that the epithet thus bestowed on the citizens of this illustrious capital refers to a deceit practised on them by the Pisans, and which the proper use of their eyes would have enabled them easily to detect.

sidence of a happy and prosperous people. For a long time the new city was altogether confined to the right bank of the river, and a single unostentatious bridge admitted the citizens to the privileges of the opposite plains. Three hundred years afterwards, the enclosure of its several suburbs, which under a mild and equitable government had quickly arisen upon every side, and the industry and genius of its inhabitants, rendered Florence an object of admiration and envy. "Behold at the beginning of the fourteenth century," says Fontani, "Florence comparing with the celebrated cities of the age; behold her foremost in Italy, and famous in Europe, for the activity of her industrious citizens, the splendour of their public enterprises, and the simple frugality of their private lives, when, in the language of Dante,

"Florence within her ancient limit-mark
Which calls her still to matin prayers and noon,
Was chaste and sober and abode in peace!"

The emperor, in token of the future greatness of the place, there celebrated the most mournful solemnities of the christian church; and three days afterwards rejoiced, as it were, in commemoration of a world redeemed, among a people recalled into existence by his will. If, however, the allusion were presumptuous, the benefits conferred on the citizens at his departure were at least equal to the highest pretensions of an earthly king. He secured by a charter the most important liberties of his subjects; declared the municipality free; exacted only a moderate poll-tax for the Empire; and invited, by every encouragement, the inhabitants of the surrounding country to settle themselves in orderly community within the walls. "Wherefore, very soon," says the Chronicle "for the beauty of the site and the convenience of the place, for the river and the plain, this little Florence was soon well populated, and fortified with walls and with trenches." For a long time

her internal polity remained as fixed by her munificent patron. Like Rome, the young republic boasted the consular dignity ; and in the pride and the glory of that name, she forgot that the ancient republic was bound to no tribute for the privilege of independence and self-government. Even the name of a senate still flattered the ears of the conquered Italians ; and Florence, when the circuit of her walls would not have wearied the meanest pedestrian, and while paying a foreign sovereign for the sufferance of her police, exulted in her consuls and her hundred senators.

CHAPTER II.

States of Tuscany become independent.—Republican governments and officers.—Guelphs and Ghibelines.—First war with Pisa.—Florentine Aristocracy ; battle of Montaperti—Ascendancy of the Guelphs.—Disqualification of the Nobility.—Establishment of the Democracy.

WE shall not, in commencing the history of Republican Florence, refer to the similar institutions which, in the early ages of Greece, conferred on her cities the proud distinction of freedom, for the sake of gratifying the vanity which would gladly believe that the ruin of nations is found in the equality of individuals, and that the unalienable rights of men, as vindicated in the great charter of American liberty, are fatal in their exercise to the life of society. It is time that Americans at least should see, in the history of ancient democracies, something more than the pernicious consequences of popular rule ; and that they should inquire, when they hear that in those countries in which it has existed, the empire of the people has always resulted in the loss of the national liberty. " Viewed as Republics," says Forsyth, " the Tuscans and the Greeks

were equally turbulent within their walls, and equally vain of figuring among foreign sovereigns; always jealous of their political independence, but often negligent of their civil freedom; forever shifting their alliances abroad, or undulating between ill-balanced factions at home. In such alternations of power, the patricians became imperious, the commons blood-thirsty; and both so opposite, that nothing but an enemy at the gate could unite them. But in no point is the parallel so striking as in their hereditary hatred of each other. This passion they fostered by insulting epithets. The Tuscans called the Pisans, *traditori*; the Pistorians, *perversi*; the Sanese, *pazzi*; the Florentines, *ciechi*, &c. The Greeks (take even Bœotia alone) gave Tanagra a nickname for envy; Oropus, for avarice; Thespia, for the love of contradiction, &c."

Such are the views and opinions which respectable English writers permit themselves to form and deduce from the careful perusal of history, and *hypocrites of liberty* are their gentlest expressions to characterise the asserters of political liberty in the contest for its preservation. But the terrible energy of the republican, or, we should say, of the democratic system, the intrinsic power and the concentrated force of opinion and feeling which it induces and imparts, appear to have made no impression, to have excited no admiration in these honest inquirers. They seem, indeed, to have been completely overlooked by them, together with the important consideration of the dignity and happiness which a consciousness of self-reliance extends to the greater portion of a whole population. There is nothing, however, by which the republican form is so peculiarly and so distinctly marked as by this energy in its administration; and while the slightest dissension at home is sufficient to paralyze the exertions of a powerful monarch against his foreign enemies, while intestine wars in the state of a prince are an invitation to aggressions held out to those who suspect or covet his power, such

events are certain to give redoubled vigour and irresistible strength to the law and the government of the people. The terrific decrees of the "Committee of Public Safety" were never so dreadfully efficacious as at the time in which La Vendee was in arms against its authority, and when the parties of republican France were too numerous for invention itself to designate them by a name ; nor ever were the victories of the young republic so brilliant and so bold as while organised by Carnot, in the midst of divided councils, and a country at war against itself. This truth is continually illustrated in the wars of the Tuscan cities ; but theirs were wars of principle and opinion, till the overthrow of the republican character rendered them wars of depredation and conquest.

The cares of Matilda had elevated the Tuscan name above all the powers of Italy, and the spirit of the people had kept pace with the advancement of her influence. A nominal submission, however, still bound them to the sovereign, and no domestic tumult gave trouble to the countess towards the termination of her reign. Still the Tuscan cities had so far taken the direction of the municipal affairs into their own hands, that the death of a personally respected ruler was only required to set the republican principle in motion. The successors of this last real sovereign in Tuscany preserved little more than the name of rulers. One by one the cities over which they claimed authority fell away from their rule. The crusades had afforded to the knights of Christendom a splendid opportunity of gratifying the martial and romantic ardour, which had grown up among the institutions of chivalry, as a fruit and a moderator of the feudal despotism. But Italy had early rejected the cardinal points of feudalism ; and chivalry, its concomitant, had fixed less deeply and less durably its high-wrought enthusiasm in the minds of the Italians. In the great conquest of Jerusalem, to which Europe sent forth all its knighthood,

we hardly distinguish a son of Italy ; and in the noble poem that consecrates it to posterity, her proudest representative is a splendid poetic invention. The mercantile spirit had already displayed itself in Italy ; and if the gallies of Pisa and Genoa appeared upon the shores of Palestine, there was less of the romance of knighthood than the adventure of commerce in the enterprise that drew them to the ocean and the war. The careless reader only will behold with contempt, in the midst of a devoted and chivalric soldiery, these less enthusiastic children of commerce ; but let him return to the native homes of the several people collected on that distant shore, and he will see the free spirit of inquiry and the true light of knowledge illuminating and improving the country of these unwearied navigators, while a reduced population, a wasted treasury, and an impoverished people, reproached, in every other portion of Europe, the military fanaticism of the vain leaders of armies in the holy land. It is not easy to subdue, by the force of mere authority, the resolute and exploring spirit of a people who traverse oceans and deserts at the call of interest, unbiassed, unprotected, and uncontrolled.

With peculiar advantages for trade, Pisa, first of all the Tuscan cities, asserted her independence, and bore her own flag to battle in vindication of her rights, or in the attempt to extend or to strengthen her interests. It is difficult to fix the precise era at which Florence also renounced her allegiance to the dukes of Tuscany, if indeed, such an era had any existence in fact ; but with the termination of the twelfth century, we have the testimony of contemporary authors in proof of her entire emancipation.

The example of these cities was not long unimitated ; and the people of Lucca and Siena soon followed it in rejecting an authority which had no longer the power of coercion to force their allegiance. The inscription on her gates declared to all who sought the

protection of her walls, that Lucca, in her own right, would afford it. If these cities had simultaneously asserted their liberty, it is probable that a republican confederacy would have united them against the external power that claimed to govern them; and reconciled, by compromise and mutual sacrifice, the jealous interests by which they became at an early period so fatally divided against each other. But when Florence rejected the feudal yoke of her marquis or duke, she seemed to Pisa, already an independent state, to have entered in competition with her in the struggle no less for political power than for the advantages of political freedom. Instead, therefore, of a general union, producing a wholesome emulation among united states, were instituted partial alliances between particular cities for temporary purposes, and giving birth to deadly contentions and exterminating wars. Thus Lucca, which had been, under the viceregal government, pre-eminent in Tuscany, was driven to an unnatural combination with Siena against the growing power of Pisa; and the original discord between the Sanese and the Florentines superinduced an alliance between the latter and the people of Pisa. The spirit of conquest, however, was in this union; and, on the reduction of an enemy, that spirit would find exercise on the division of the spoil. With shifting jealousies these various coalitions were dissolved, and new ones were formed upon the same unstable condition. But, however we may deprecate this condition of things, there is none more interesting to the speculative philosopher; and perhaps it offers him the nearest opportunity of surveying in its first form the character of civilized society, and presents him historically that condition of man, which, in the heroic ages of antiquity, we learn but through the Homeric rhapsodies; a condition as distinct from that of savage life as from that of the ultra refinement which characterized European manners before the castigating hand of the French revolu-

tion restored a tone more consistent with the health of society.

The Balearic isles were at this time occupied by the Saracens, and served them as a rallying point in all the descents which they and their African brethren might meditate upon Italy and the west. From these common depredators, the Pisans, having most extensive maritime relations, suffered most ; but their resolution to emancipate their own commerce from the restraint imposed by the Saracenic piracies, was an adoption of the quarrel of Europe, while the war that succeeded was almost a single-handed contest of Pisa against Africa for the benefit of all the Mediterranean countries. The good faith of the Florentines was not less conspicuous during the continuance of this contest than the intrepidity of the Pisans ; and both illustrate the primitive character of the times. On going forth to fight the battle of all Italy, Pisa had no reason to expect forbearance on the part of her Lucchese enemies. Her so formidable preparations against the islands of Minorca and Majorca, having left the wives and children of her soldiers without defence, she was compelled to call upon her Florentine allies for a protecting army to guard her domestic independence, if not to secure her existence. Through the whole of this hard contested war, the Florentine army stood between Pisa and her enemies, forming, as it were, a double wall of defence to the feeble citizens ; and in all that time the Pisans did not see the face of a Florentine soldier to terrify them by an exhibition of power, or insult them by the boast of protection. "The captain," says Ammirato, "anxious to obey the commands of the republic, and desirous that no act of license on the part of any individual should diminish the benefit conferred by his country at large ; and that the Pisans should not pay for the security of their homes by suspicion of the honour of their wives, refused to enter the city ; but choosing a post at the

convenient distance of two miles from the walls, there fixed his camp. Upon which conduct, when I look," continues the narrator, "I wonder less how it has succeeded to a people, to increase in power over the rest, giving in such demonstrations no weak evidence of a confirmed and well-founded virtue in the arts of government."

The war, meanwhile, was carried on with vigour; but the resistance of the Saracens was as obstinate as the christian attack was fierce. Inch by inch they contested, first their soil and afterwards their walls; and when, at last, the Balearic islands fell into the hands of the Pisans, the victory was celebrated by Europe as a general triumph. The dead who had perished in this war were of too holy an earth to repose in the land that had so recently been infidel; and the bodies of all who had in any degree been distinguished, were carried to Marseilles, and there received in consecrated soil the last rites that religion and respect could pay to their sacred remains.

While the Italian cities were thus daily gaining strength, a last effort was to be made on the part of the emperor to re-establish the imperial authority. Frederic Barbarossa, who then filled the throne, was well fitted by disposition and character for the attempt. His first entrance into Italy was a triumph and a slaughter. He took possession of every town, village, and castle; and, resolving to abolish even the forms of liberty, and the habits associated with a name so long connected with all that was powerful and glorious and exciting in freedom, he annihilated the consular office, which still, in name, connected the Italians with the best days of the republic, and kept the recollection of its liberty still present to their minds. For the consul he substituted an officer called Podestá, whose very name contrasted with that of the republican officer of which the Italians had been deprived, as ominously as the abuse of his power contrasted with the former

exercise of the consular functions. The cities rebelled, and the famous Lombard league was formed, by which the different people of Lombardy bound themselves to resist the imperial oppression. The treaty of Constance was the consequence of this league, and its first fruit the acknowledgment of the independence of all parties in the confederation. The means by which this great end had been effected were too obvious to be mistaken by a people that sighed for the same ennobling privilege of liberty. The Tuscan league, in which Siena, Florence, and Arezzo joined, as it was formed in the same spirit by a brave and resolute people, soon terminated with a like result. Pisa alone, then and afterwards, continued faithful to the emperor; and if, for a time, she found her account in the patronage of the Empire, or rather in the license of coquetting with its lords, she broke the early and familiar tie that had so long bound her to Florence; and the destructive wars, the ceaseless enmity, the spirit of extermination which manifested itself in their hostility, had their origin in this essential difference of principle.

Meanwhile the population of Florence had been increasing in intelligence and wealth. The imperial power, broken by the Lombard league, had been almost annihilated by that which succeeded in Tuscany; for though the emperor preserved, even after the treaty of Constance, a nominal authority in Italy, the republican spirit was so naturally hostile even to this show of dependence, that by the commencement of the thirteenth century the government of Florence had become in all respects that of a free commonwealth. The consular dignity, naturally sacred in the eyes of the Italians, as consecrated to liberty, was the favourite of the people. Thus, as each successive government believed itself to have acquired a right to the elevated state of independence, its magistrates were graced with this name; which contained, as it were, a charm for the security of its immunities. Very soon, neverthe-

less, the power of these officers, whose title had almost lulled suspicion into confidence, became alarming to those who had conferred it; and who, trusting to its name, had forgotten that none of the attendant institutions were Roman, and that the ancient name might hide a modern tyranny. Just cause of complaint was too often given besides by the incumbent, and the office of Podestá was revived to supersede that of consul; but all that had formerly appeared in the name as a type of regal oppression, now seemed an emblem of the efficacy and power of sovereign law derived from the people. The terms of their creation required that these Podestá should be foreigners; that they should be chosen only for a year; and that, leaving their friends, and even their nearest kindred, such as children and wife, they should come and make themselves prisoners among the people whom they were to command.* The virtues of easy access and a frank familiarity, so much in praise when they adorn the character of the absolute ruler of a subject people, were deprecated by the cautious citizen; and the incorruptible judge was hardly expected to be found at the festive, or even at the social, board of him who might one day be his suitor for justice, and who was always dependent upon him for the equal administration of public law. But with all the checks thus imposed on the authority of

* Other curious particulars, more especially as to the mode of electing the Podestá, are given by Sigonius. "Septembri mense pro arbitrio magistratus concilium speciale et generale vocabatur: antequam tamen vocaretur indicebatur populo, quo die et qua hora hæc aut illa tribus ad sortem esset proditura; atque eodem quo dixi ordine ex utroque concilio, magistratibus exclusis quadraginta sorte legebantur. Qui extemplo secretum pariter in locum se referebant, ita ut nemo posset in aures eorum insusurrare, nec scriptum aliquod porrigere, aut alia ratione eorum judicia depravare. Qui si sequenti nocte, et postera die usque ad vespertas triginta septem consentientibus prætorem novum non declarassent, jus lectionis amittebant, atque alio die consilium generale et credentiæ vocabatur, atque ex utroque consilio alii quadraginta eodem ratione legebantur; qui si ne ipsi consensissent, tum consiliorum ipsorum suffragiis generalis inquam et credentiæ res permittebatur."

the Podestá, he was yet an object of popular suspicion. That portion of his command by which he had the disposal of the military force, was, therefore, early taken from him on the creation of a new officer to assume the suspected prerogative. Neither had the consular office been absolutely abolished in Florence; and this, together with the senate or council, still remained to guard the public rights. With such a government, Florence continued some time at peace with her rivals, protecting her territory, and reducing her citizens and the castle lords around to a legal and orderly subjection.

The peculiar nature of the feudal institutions, as they were modified in Italy, has been already explained, and the effects of their establishment were made manifest in their overthrow. The high barons, when dispossessed of all political sovereignty in their several castles, had lost nothing of the right of property; and in the weakness of the surrounding cities they found an impunity for violence amounting to little less than sovereign power, though wanting its political importance and dignity. They still retained, moreover, the influence which wealth, accumulated by rapine, long habit of hereditary respect on the part of the populace, boldness and intrepidity of character, with a sense of security in their walls and their personal strength, could not fail to secure. Relying upon this, and on the troubles and consequent infirmity of the city authorities, they continued as openly as ever to exercise all kinds of wrong upon those whose ill fortune rendered them obnoxious to their displeasure, or whose treasures were sufficient to excite their cupidity. Nor did the daily commission of undisguised robbery, for which no softer name was sought, impair the character or lessen the importance of these marauding lords. It was an open conflict of power against law, in which victory was hardly less honourable on one side than on the other, and in which disgrace was unknown but

in defeat. Analogy of circumstances, in the early ages of the world, rendered not disreputable among the Greeks, Phœnicians, &c. the name and occupation of piracy, and at a later period gave to the famed sea kings a title to admiration in proportion to the depredations they had committed and the atrocities by which they had signalized their achievements. No sooner, therefore, did Florence discover her strength in her organized police, than she turned to the reduction of these lords of the highway, who had already lost in her established order the great hope of their strength.

It is now that we enter, strictly speaking, upon the history of the republic, and of those factions by which the republican era of her history was so remarkably characterized. We have, as yet, seen nothing of these factions in the outline which we have hitherto followed ; nor so long as the baronial excesses were tolerated, was the city disturbed by the castle nobility. But when the feuds which had arisen between the most powerful individuals of this class, and the spirit of animosity which had vented itself before in quarrels pernicious only to the baronial pride and destructive to its power, were confined within the walls of a city ; when the strength which the nobles had formerly enjoyed in the number of hereditary or hired retainers, was now to be derived from the popular favour ; the war of partizanship commenced, and the citizens of Florence arrayed themselves, through affection and favour, under different leaders against one another, before they had even the pretence of a principle for which to contend. A similar effect resulted from the same cause in the Roman states and the kingdom of the Sicilies, though the Colonna and the Savelli, heads of the principal factions, made slight pretensions in their quarrels to the glory of republican patriotism.

About the year 1215 these differences began to manifest themselves in such a manner as to render it too evident that family feuds, independent of all political

character, and family alliances were sufficient to disturb the peace of the city beyond the power of the magistracy to restore. If a difference, however, of views and opinions prevailed in the state at a period like this, it would naturally be seized in each personal quarrel, and a party name would be eagerly sought to add importance and bitterness to private feuds. The political bias of the government and the people might be easily interested, and the first ground of quarrel would be speedily lost in the espousal of the cause of the church or the Empire.

Seventy or eighty families formed at this time in Florence the high nobility. Among these were many who had been distinguished before as most powerful for their fortified castles, and for the number of their retainers and alliances. Young Buondelmonte, the head of an ambitious race, had been betrothed to a daughter of the house of Amidei. In this union, which was to join with their extensive connexions the Buondelmonti, the Amidei, and the Uberti, with others whose influence was sufficient in their quarrel to enlist the whole population of Florence, the parties were unknown to each other. Time was considered necessary between the plighting and the solemnization of the nuptials to give them that splendour which the dignity of either side was supposed to require. In this interval, while the peace of the city was left in the power of an unsteady youth, his fortune was preparing for it years of anarchy and civil war.

“ Oh Buondelmonte ! what ill counselling
Prevailed on thee to break the plighted bond ?
Many, who now are weeping, would rejoice
Had God to Emma given thee, the first time
Thou near our city camest—but so was doomed
Florence ! ”

says Dante ; and all the writers of the time, to the faithlessness of Buondelmonte and the revenge of his enemies attribute those misfortunes which were inevitable

in the constitution of the times, and which resulted in the establishment of a liberty that must otherwise have early perished between the claims of Rome and Germany. "During these troubles," says a writer who has said but few things with equal judgment, "talent was roused and invigorated by collision, while each leader struggled to obtain some temporary popularity by some popular concession."

Meanwhile the preparations for the marriage were nearly completed, and young Buondelmonte was looked upon by all as the husband of Emma of the Amidei. But the ambitious hopes of the Donati were concerned in the completion, or rather in the interruption, of these espousals; and the projected union was soon to be converted into an eternal feud. The head of this family was a female at the trying crisis when, as the only heir to its honours was a daughter, a protecting alliance by marriage was thought necessary to maintain and direct its authority. Buondelmonte, besides being the most accomplished cavalier, was also one of the most powerful barons of the state; and the Donati could form no more honourable or useful alliance. We have already alluded to the early history of antiquity as affording similar characters and similar institutions to those which distinguished the rising republics of Italy in the dark ages. Without intending to lay much stress upon the fact, it is still worth observation as such, that in no two eras of the world are like events more clearly referrible to like causes; and in none is the exercise of female influence more strikingly characteristic of the age. Ammirato observes that "neither fabulously nor poetically, but with all regard to truth, it may be said, that the beauties of this fair Donati were no less pernicious to Florence than those of Helen had been to Troy."

The mother of this young girl who was destined to produce a more than ten years' war to Italy, watched eagerly each opportunity of obtruding herself upon the

young Buondelmonte. None, however, occurred until the day almost on which the last ceremonial was to be solemnized. Buondelmonte was then in Florence; and however desperate the hope might seem of winning him, it was still sufficient for the intriguing mother aided by the charms of her daughter. Buondelmonte and this woman met by accident, as it appeared to the latter, near the palace of the Donati. He received the salutation and congratulation of the lady, and would have passed, but she detained him for a farther compliment, and that compliment was the signal for the entrance into Italy of what her historians call the "accursed names" of Ghibelines and Guelphs. "You have chosen fairly," said the lady, "but a fairer might have been your choice; and the daughter of a Donati would have brought no disgrace to the best blood of Florence." Buondelmonte at that moment cast his eyes on the daughter, who, in obedience to a sign from her mother, appeared from the palace. "I kept her for your sake," continued the mother; "is she beautiful! look on her! I cherished her beauties for you." "For me," said Buondelmonte, "then, that which is kept for me is mine; the beauty that has bloomed for me none else shall gather." The Italians, though but little romantic in their religion and their wars, were full of the spirit of adventure in their love; that night the nuptials of Buondelmonte were performed with the heiress of the Donati; and, soon after, he was found near the passage of the Arno mangled with the wounds of the revengeful partizans of the outraged Amidei.

While all Italy witnessed the differences between the popes and the emperor, it was impossible that men should not become, in feeling at least, and by sympathy, parties on either side in the contest as interest dictated, or as political predilections inclined. In Florence, this sympathy was deeply felt, and greatly divided the people: but with the utmost acrimony of feeling the citizens had found as yet no pretext for violence.

The moment, however, was at hand; the friends of the Buondelmonti on one side, and those of the Amidei on the other, were in arms; the streets were barricaded, that none might escape who were destined, and that none who were bound to support the quarrel of either, might avoid the encounter; the civil authority was lost in the desperate struggle that enlisted on either side the interest, and on both excited the fury of the citizens. All the rancour of long repressed hatred burst forth to strengthen the animosity of the combatants; and while the friends of the church attached themselves naturally to that one of the leading families whose opinions were known in favour of the Romish cause, a similar impulsive force attracted to the opposite side the friends of the emperor. The name of Ghibeline, by which the latter had already been distinguished in other countries, thus changed in a moment the quarrel of the Amidei and Uberti into that of half of Italy; and the epithet of Guelph converted the cause of the Buondelmonti into that of religion. Those who cared little for the fate of the first disputants were excited by the obstinacy and warmth of contested opinion; and passion, or conscience, or cunning, conducted to this civil slaughter the children of one soil and the offspring of one bed.

The prosperity of Florence, whose young commerce had already elevated her to a level with the first cities of Europe, seemed threatened with utter extinction. But the Florentines have been called a peculiar people, and to their frame of mind or organization have been assigned results which belonged inevitably to the frame of their government. In the midst of their hostilities, a cessation by understanding, but without terms or conditions, was no uncommon occurrence, till the re-establishment of affairs and the public prosperity would allow them to resume their arms and their animosities. In this manner the city now obtained a sudden and temporary peace.

The preaching of a new crusade was for Florence a public benefit, and a just cause of gratitude to Rome. A number of the wild spirits by which her peace had been disturbed and all her orders agitated, found, or thought to find, in Palestine a wider and more glorious field of enterprise; and the fame of her champions abroad acquired new respect for the city to which their absence gave tranquillity.

Peculiar circumstances growing out of the relation in which Pisa and Florence at first stood in regard to each other and to the different states of Tuscany, had, as we have already explained, united in a constant alliance these powerful cities. The jealousy, however, which naturally arises from the pursuit of one object by different people, and still more the discrepancy in their political opinions and affections, had excited on either hand a mutual fear and want of confidence, which the increasing power of the one or the temporary depression of the other, would be certain to ripen into open hostility. Still the Florentines, depending on the Pisans for all the benefits of their commercial enterprise, had the greatest reasons for avoiding a rupture; and the prudent reluctance with which they endeavoured to shun it, contrasted with the wilful alacrity of the Pisans in courting it, gives no insufficient evidence of a policy destined on the one hand to succeed, and to succumb on the other.

The tact of the Pisan ambassador at Rome required no instruction from his government; and a quarrel with the Florentine envoy, which, under other circumstances, would be strictly personal, was construed by the people that wanted but a pretext for war, into a cause of hostility. They confiscated the property of the Florentines, on the faith of the ancient treaties deposited in their ports; and when the Florentines, still unwilling to look upon them as enemies, demanded restitution, they refused to make even such reparation, as, without amounting to indemnity, might satisfy the na-

tional honour. From this time the wars of Pisa and Florence constitute a prominent portion in the history of either republic, and the issue of the first encounter might have served as a token of the final result of the contest. The Florentines returned to the city with thirteen hundred prisoners, made in a single engagement.

During this war the virulence of party spirit had not declined. Though the authority of Frederic the Second for a time gave to the Ghibelines the ascendancy in Italy, the Florentines continued to wear the titular badge of papal adherence. On the termination of the difference with Pisa, the opposite factions resorted to arms, and, aided by the German soldiers of Frederic, the party of that prince succeeded in expelling the Guelphs from the city. But their expulsion by no means implied their submission ; for, though in a subsequent battle they suffered a great diminution of their strength, they still retained the name of a party and the arms of an enemy. A second contest in the Val d' Arno compelled the Ghibelines to return to the shelter of their walls with the disgrace of an absolute defeat.

The chronicles of every nation present their peculiar problems for solution to the inquirer, and out of these is collected the philosophy of history. According to their number and importance must be estimated the importance of any history to mankind. The battles and the interests of a people who at first view present little in their annals but an account of skirmishes for foreign wars and of private ambition at home for great political questions, may seem to be beneath the care of the historian. But if the existence, the progress, and decline of such a people involve a principle, the influence of which has extended to the affairs of other and of greater communities ; if, in short, they involve a political problem, whose solution becomes necessary for the due appreciation of general truths ; then, without regard

to the extent of its territorial possessions, we learn to measure by a new scale the value of its history.* Three ages of the world have been republican, and the one broad principle of republicanism being common to them all, we shall find the characteristic institutions of these several ages to differ so greatly as to raise a doubt whether they have really any one impulse in common. The history of Florence represents in many particulars that of all the Republics of Italy, till the arrival at least of Charles VIII. in that country, offering at the same time the truest picture of the then republican spirit in politics.

The acknowledged right of a people to self-government was set down in no bill of rights; but it was steadfastly asserted, and the sovereignty of the people was continually vindicated by continual exercise. That modification of this principle by which the quiet rule of a majority is constituted law, is a fruit of their early dissensions. The right of the majority is resolvable into its power, and a prudent avoidance of conflict with superior force gave birth to this expediency. In the ages of the lower empire such considerations could not obtain, a thousand causes rendered other habits and another tone inevitable; the invention of gunpowder

* "The republics which flourished in Italy during the middle ages have neither been attached by ancient alliances, nor opposed by long rivalries and wars, to the powers which divide Europe at this day. From this it might be supposed that their history is altogether of secondary importance, and that each people, after having studied its own, should give precedence over that of the Italians to the history either of hereditary allies, or of those who, by a prejudice of barbarism, are called natural enemies. It would be a great error: history has no true importance but as it contains a moral lesson. It should be explored, not for scenes of carnage, but for instructions in the government of mankind. The knowledge of times past is good only as it instructs us to avoid mistakes, to imitate virtues, to improve by experience: but the pre-eminent object of this study,—the science of governing men for their advantage, of developing their individual faculties, intellectual and moral, for their greater happiness,—that political philosophy, began in modern Europe only with the Italian republics of the middle ages, and from them diffused itself over other nations."—*Sismondi*.

and the disuse of armour annihilated the greater part of them. But during the prevalence of the early opinions, the right of the majority was to be ascertained and secured by the exercise of its power, in which, as it then consisted, it still in reality consists. The analogy and the differences between the republics of the middle ages and those of antiquity offer a wide and interesting theme for examination; and the consideration of all the principles of the Florentine government, of its peculiarities of circumstance and time, become for this purpose no less important and of no less interest than those of its early forerunner in the career of intellectual emancipation.

The Ghibelines, by attaching themselves to the cause of the Empire, became soon, in the eyes of their countrymen, to appear in the light of an aristocracy; while even the nobles among the Guelphs, by espousing the cause of the independents, were looked on as a popular faction. In this state of feeling the banished party had always hope of a recall; and the victorious imperialists were ever at the mercy of the populace, which they could only in part conciliate by the gradual but constant abandonment of ancient privileges. Thus the factions at first resulted in individual emancipation of the orders, which under the feudal laws were almost in the condition of slavery,* and by the partial success of the minority effected the perfect establishment of political liberty. We shall find, indeed, that if an aristocracy prevailed from this time forward in Florence, it was an aristocracy founded on the substantial basis of wealth, and very little affected by the imaginary virtue of patrician blood. The instability of this basis, and the fluctuating nature of the medium of

* "The peasants of this condition were sometimes made use of in war, and rewarded with enfranchisement; especially in Italy, where the cities and petty states had often occasion to defend themselves with their whole population: hence the eleventh and twelfth centuries saw the number of slaves in Italy begin to decrease."—*Hallam*

aristocratic influence, while they placed the highest in salutary fear, left open to the lowest the hope of elevation, and the certainty of political influence as a concomitant of successful industry and enterprise. Such in its nature is an aristocracy of wealth, where the strict law of primogeniture is unknown ; and so nearly does it partake of and indicate the republican spirit.

There were insurmountable difficulties at Florence in the way of a total abolition of political and civil distinctions, among which most prominent was her situation in the midst of the feudal nations of Europe. These alone are sufficient to prove that, as republics, the governments of the middle ages were designed in the nature of things to be transitory. They were to preserve, to cherish, to prove and to extend, a principle ; future ages and another race were to develope fully and reduce it to perfect practice.

This, at least, deserves consideration, when the ultimate subjugation of the little republics of Italy is triumphantly cited by the political advocates of non-resistance and obedience.

It will be impossible to render justice to the Florentines on the perusal of their revolutions, if we judge them by the rules of conduct which in our day may seem to have obtained the general sanction. With us, the opulent and the well-descended are permitted to enjoy an imagined respectability, and to exclude from their circles the less favoured or the less presumptuous ; but the loss of political influence, in exact proportion to the assumption of greater worth and the manifestation of greater pride, is the inevitable consequence : and the violation of social liberty is atoned for by the destitution of political weight. In Italy, on the contrary, all public respect had long centred in the aristocracy, and power was confided and almost confined to their hands. To wrest it from them, and to place it in the care of its legitimate depositaries, a strong, a resolute, and an unremitting exertion of power was requisite ; and

the jealousy of dominion would not have suffered the once abandoned contest to be resumed with equal probability of a fortunate result. The struggle between a people and its oppressors once begun has no cessation but the end ; one moment to recede, is to yield to the despotism of opinion supported by false theory and inveterate habit. In Florence, therefore, the people, though acknowledging the principle of equal rights and contending for its universal reception, were obliged to resort to exclusion, disqualification, and disfranchisement in their contests with the nobility.

The difficulties of the Ghibelines in power daily increased, and the popular demands rose in proportion to the danger which threatened the government from without. Dissatisfied with the rule of the Podestà, whose office they justly considered in every particular adverse to freedom, the people rose on occasion of a quarrel with the Uberti, and, expatiating on their sufferings, resolved that all arose from the too great power of the government and the interference of the Uberti in its administration. As the Ghibelines were in no condition to resist, the salutary check which the people required was placed upon the rulers who pretended to the imperial protection. The city was divided into sixths or wards, and each of these renewed, by annual elections, its officers to preside over the general affairs of the people. These officers were called Ancients of the people, and their government was long the favourite of the Florentines. It was essentially republican in its creation ; and the Ancients, except in the union of legislative and executive powers, were not, as regarded their popular character, unlike the tribunes, who so long, so zealously, and sometimes so tumultuously, guarded the popular privileges of the Romans. The long and habitual insubordination of the high nobility had left among the people a feeling of insecurity in their faith ; a city militia, for the protection of property and the preservation of the peace, was

therefore established to attend the summons of the Ancients, or the captain of the people acting under their authority and then first created. The pride of the populace increasing with the establishment of their supremacy, displayed itself in one of those singular exhibitions, which, between magnanimity and temerity, designate an inartificial state of society. It was ordered that the army should not be drawn out against any foreign enemy until the alarm-bell of the city, called the *Martinella*, had, by sounding for a month continually, given notice to all who had reason to expect hostility from Florence of the preparation making against them. These changes had not been effected without the aid of the Guelphs, who on the death of Frederic beheld themselves immediately in a condition to return to the city, almost as soon, to participate in the government, and, not long after, to engross the whole management of the public concerns and the entire control of the popular feeling. The distinction of name, and the difference of principle by which the opposite parties had been known, were not enough to satisfy the animosity of their sentiments. They had before appeared under the ensigns of the city common to both, who fought in its name and by abuse of its authority. These ensigns were now changed, the white lily of Florence was altered by the dominant party into the red; and the lilies of the Guelph and Ghibeline were put forward to excite the almost worn-out animosities of the citizens, and to renew, for a name and a colour, the passions that had no care for a principle. There is no one who, having read the history of the white and red roses of Lancaster and York, will not remember the effect produced by allusion merely to those words to stir up the sympathy of men who knew little of the adverse claims of the contending lines. As the interests of the papal party prospered in Florence, those of the imperialists languished throughout Italy; and the authority of Rome went day by

day extending itself with a more baleful influence over the opinions of men.

None of the Italian republics had as yet exerted all the rights that seem the natural attendants of liberty, and the emperor still laid on the Tuscan coins an acknowledgment of supremacy which he could not more directly extort from the Guelph cities of Tuscany. In the year 1252, the commune of Florence first ventured to impress the arms of the city upon the gold florins coined by her authority. These soon became a current medium in Europe, and among the more distant people of the other continents with which the commerce of the Italian states connected them. We may not be willing to believe all the storics of new influence and new credit procured to the Florentines in consequence of the beauty and genuineness of their florins ; but we can easily believe, that while the purest coin known to the trading communities of Europe, Asia, and Africa, bore the republican arms, it could hardly fail to secure their respect for a people by whose authority they had been struck, and by whose enterprise and energy they were thus spread over the world.

With each demonstration of power the pride of the republic increased, while new victories added daily to its strength. Its principal rival was now felt to be Pisa alone ; for Florence perceived she had outgrown the rivalry of Lucca, Sienna, Pistoia, and Arezzo. A full sense of this rivalry, and the vital importance of the contest for supremacy in Tuscany thus narrowed to themselves, could not fail to produce a mutual hatred and to kindle frequent hostility. There is little in the account of the many encounters which ensued to distinguish them from every common engagement, and we shall not pretend to detail them. But there were serious results, as the fruits of even the slightest skirmishes, of which Florence did not fail to make her advantage. Nor did she always look for what might

seem directly political advancement, but some privilege secured to the Florentine merchants, who still traded through the Porto Pisano, was sure to follow as a consequence of victory in the skirmishes of the rival people. Thus commenced the commercial prosperity of this remarkable nation ; and if the application of such a name to the inhabitants of a single city appear exaggerated, we have only to expose their peculiar policy and independent government, with extensive mercantile relations subject to this government and deduced out of this policy—a character distinguishing them from all the rest of mankind—we have only to point out their acknowledged political weight, and their participation in the council or congress of nations, to vindicate for them all the distinctive characteristics of nationality, and to claim for them all the honours that attach to its name.

On the death of Frederic, which restored the ascendancy of the Guelphs, it was, perhaps, scarcely expected that the opposite faction would ever be able to constitute itself an armed opposition. The ecclesiastical power had acquired the firmest consistency, and its party had always been numerically superior to that of the Germans. For this reason, the ordinary system had not been resorted to against the Ghibelines, and they were still found in considerable numbers within all the cities in which the decease of their protector had given the chief rule to their enemies. The leaders, perhaps, of the nobility were not unwilling to encourage a weak opposition, in order to keep alive the interest of their adherents, and thereby to divert them from the pursuit of objects affecting the rights of the aristocracy. In this, so long as they had no serious hostility to apprehend from the opposition thus cherished, they never failed to accomplish their end ; but they were sure to pay an usurious interest to the people when an appeal to them became necessary against the encroachments of the opposite party for serious and

efficient services. In this condition, when Manfredi, the natural son of Frederic, prepared to assert the rights of the house of Suabia in Italy, he found a power ready constituted to paralyze the efforts of his enemies, could he have offered it any corroboration. But though the influence of the Tuscan cities was not overlooked by him, his battle was not to be fought within their limits; and when the Ghibelines of Pisa sought, by weight of his authority, to undo that which they had done but through the strong compulsion of necessity, and to re-establish his interest at once and their own influence, they found themselves abandoned to cope single-handed with the power of Florence, then single-handed an overmatch for all the states of Tuscany combined.

The hard terms of the peace, which in 1254 the Florentines had granted to the Pisans, had affected their commercial importance; but the peace which was now offered to them struck at its very existence and threatened the national safety. They were required to surrender their principal fortresses; and, among others, that of Mutrone, which appeared to offer, next to the port of Pisa itself, advantages as a mart for a large portion of the Tuscan commerce along the seaboard of the Mediterranean. This fortress it was the intention of the conquerors to demolish.

The whole procedure of the Florentines in the transaction which would seem otherwise unimportant, illustrates the system of warfare among the republics, and manifests how little the spirit of conquest was in their early wars. The Pisans were not more loth to surrender so important a post than they were apprehensive of seeing it occupied by the Florentines. The project of dismantling was, therefore, most agreeable to that people; and their envoy at Florence was ordered to spare nothing that might induce the most influential members of the council at Florence to persist in requiring the demolition of the fort. Aldobrandini Otto-

buoni, one of the Ancients, had been earnest on a first deliberation in advocating such a measure ; and as he was in indigent circumstances, the Pisan ambassador caused him to be informed that Pisa would not be ungrateful in case he should succeed in effecting his wishes ; four thousand florins of gold were placed as earnest at his command and disposal. Ottobuoni replied, that if he should be found in the end to have rendered a service to Pisa, he would certainly not reject the acknowledgment of her gratitude.

On the following day Ottobuoni appeared in the council, and exposing himself to all the charges that might possibly be made against his change of opinion, he resolutely opposed the design which he had most strenuously advocated before. "It is true," said he, "our fathers were accustomed to proceed in similar cases after the manner now proposed ; but our fathers desired to give scope and extent to the city. Now the city has already exceeded the most expedient bounds. The Pisans would not desire us to have even a hut upon the coast, and call us, in derision for our dependence upon them, their mountaineers." After much discussion, the second opinion of Aldobrandini prevailed. It was subsequently known that he had been tempted with the offer of an immense sum to favour the hopes of the Pisans ; but the monument that, on his death, a short time afterwards was erected to the perpetuation of his memory and that of his frugal honesty, was the only reward that the republic could offer or that he could accept without diminution of his fame.

The city was now in the hands of the Guelphs ; and the Ghibelines, either voluntarily or by compulsion of the opposite party, abandoned their homes. Sienna still offered them an asylum ; and within her walls were collected the refugees of the fallen faction from all the towns of Tuscany, and even from many others in which similar divisions had taken place : while the

Guelphs of this city of refuge were obliged to seek protection in the other capitals in which their faction was paramount. Among the exiled Ghibelines, the most prominent character was Farinata degli Uberti; and as his influence and his ability were equally acknowledged by his party, he became the hero of the memorable years of Manfredi's success in Italy.

This prince had been warmly urged by his adherents in Tuscany to consolidate his power in that district, by detaching, for the aid and encouragement of his faction, a body of German troops sufficient to equalize the numerical strength of the parties. But Manfredi was engrossed with the thought and the care of establishing his rule in the Sicilies; and though he did not think proper to reject the suit of his Tuscan partizans entirely, he informed them that the most which he could do would be to furnish them a small body of seventy German soldiers and knights. The Ghibelines, who felt that they had a right to expect a real support from the emperor, would have rejected an aid so inefficient; but the prudence of Farinata prevailed, and this little troop was accepted. The ability of the leader soon made the services of the Germans availing, when, reckoning upon their loss, he exposed them in the first ensuing encounter in such a manner that scarcely an individual survived. He had foreseen the effect of this sacrifice, and his discretion was now appreciated by his party as three hundred Germans, commanded by the count Giordano, appeared in Tuscany to join the Ghibelines of Sienna, and retrieve the glory of the Suabian arms. The next design of this skilful politician was still more comprehensive, proposing nothing less than the destruction of the opposite party. He caused the Florentines to be informed that the Sanese, discontented with the Ghibeline rule, desired only the appearance of a respectable force to expel the leaders of that faction and to assume the title of Guelphs, that they might live in amity with their countrymen of all

the cities of Tuscany. The Florentines, though dissuaded by the principal nobles, were easily induced to undertake a conquest that promised to be so certain of accomplishment, and all the cities in which their party predominated were anxious to participate in the success. Their numbers were still farther swelled by large bodies of Guelphs, who, having been expelled from Sienna and the few other places in which the Ghibelines still prevailed, had thus hopes of being restored to their country.

At no former time had the people of so many cities appeared in arms against one another. But it was not an array of national forces for the purpose of establishing a national superiority ; nor were the opposing arms so constituted that either might be designated as the Florentine or the Sanese. It was all Italy contending for a principle ; and the names of Guelph and Ghibeline, which represented the several parties, had quite obliterated the feeling of country in the hearts and minds of the Tuscans. The allied Guelphs arrived at Monteperti, and there expected to receive the submission of the Sanese. The first appearance, however, from the city, informed them that Sienna was still to be won, as the Ghibelines were marching against them with all the insignia of war, headed by a formidable troop of German soldiery, and breathing a spirit of hatred not inferior to their own. However unexpected this spectacle must have been to them, the Florentines were in no wise daunted by the approach of their enemies. The fate of either party was upon the issue of the battle, and the contest began with a fury and a resolution which seemed to indicate that each was firm in the resolution to gain a lasting ascendancy by the extermination of the other.

When the Florentine forces had been assembled, an oppressive fine and the dread of heavier punishment had been held out as a threat to bring the most reluctant into the field. There were, of course, many Ghi-

belines whose sentiments had not been formerly made so notorious as to subject them to banishment among the Florentines. A large body of this party, which had swelled the ranks of the allies for display, passed over for battle to those of their enemies. While the issue of the fight was yet undetermined, the flag of the Florentines was seen to decline; the standard-bearer had been treacherously struck down by a Ghibeline, and the rallying-point of the Florentines for a while was uncertain. In this condition the cavalry, either dismayed or apprehensive of treachery, abandoned the field; and the diminished infantry remained alone to sustain the impetuosity of the attack which was making at every instant with recruited numbers and redoubled enthusiasm. The Florentines, however, still adhered to their standard; and when unable longer to fight, they suffered themselves to be cut to pieces by the Germans in the act of embracing and defending it with their unresisting bodies.

Tornaquinci, an aged veteran, who had passed upwards of seventy years in all the vicissitudes of his party and of the state, had been placed as one of the chief guardians of the car that bore the popular ensign. Beholding the flight and the ruin of his countrymen, "and what," exclaimed he to his son and three kinsmen that attended him, "what, shall we, too, think of flight? shall we hasten to Florence, whither, with all our haste, the enemy will have arrived before us? There were many who, in our former expulsion from Florence, bore envy to the memory of those who fell within the walls of their country; let us be envied hereafter for having perished on this memorable day by this river of Arbia, that we might not behold this standard, confided to our valour, in the hands of our enemy, which has never yet been said of it in all its wars; and as I am the first of us who came into the world, so for this cause, as is most just, will I show you the way to an honourable death." "This," says Ammirato, "is that

memorable and sanguinary day of Monteperti, the 4th of September, 1260, in which for the first time the car of the standard and the bell martinella, the equipage of the Florentines and their allies, fell into the power of their enemies; in consequence of which, the ancient signory of Florence, with its magistrates, was overturned; so that the power of the Guelphs in Tuscany and throughout all Italy was destroyed, while that of the Ghibelines triumphed. Hence, too, the pride of Manfred so increased, that, not long after, he fell with all his party beneath the insupportable burthen of their own weight, hateful alike to mankind and to heaven." Many years afterwards the family of Farinata were still persecuted in memory of the slaughter of the Guelphs at this battle;* and the shame of their defeat still kept alive the hatred of the Florentines for his name, and persecuted his children.

The survivors of the rout at Monteperti, ashamed of returning to Florence, directed their flight towards Lucca, and nine days afterwards the rest of their party deserted the city. The Ghibelines assumed in all other places an equal ascendancy, and Lucca only remained for a time to receive the fugitives whom the prevalence of the German interest banished from their homes. Florence became completely Ghibeline, and the calm fury of premeditated vengeance stopped nothing short of the contemplated destruction of the city. An assembly of all who were adverse to the cause of Rome was held at Empoli, where the utter destruction of Florence was suggested as an only means of permanently reducing the party of the Guelphs, and of securing prosperity and quiet to the Ghibelines. In this assembly not a voice was raised for the unfortunate city till Farinata arose to interpose in her behalf.

* "The slaughter and great havoc, I replied,
That coloured Arbia's flood with crimson stain—
To these impute that in our hallowed dome
Such orisons ascend."—*Dante*.

"We have fought for a home, and not for the destruction of our fathers' hearths!" cried he. "If for the love which we bore to Florence as to our mother earth; if that we might live respected within the circuit of her walls, we have not hesitated to draw our swords against our countrymen; if for so long a time we have not feared to peril our lives against the superior power which kept us in exile; we will not suffer the end of our labour and the object of our hopes to be frustrated by the overthrow of these walls and these edifices, raised by ourselves and by our fathers as monuments of valour and success. If this resolve be persisted in, it must be accomplished by my destruction, and that of all who, like me, have an arm for their country."

To the courage and magnanimity of her conqueror Florence now owed her preservation, and his party at a later day knew how to avail themselves of his generosity to claim an equal forbearance on the part of their victorious enemies. It was, in still more modern times, the intention of one of the Medici to erect a monument in commemoration of this event, and of the patriotism of its hero; but that satire on the change of times was avoided.

Instead, therefore, of destroying the stronghold of the Guelphs, a regulation, called the *Taglia*, was adopted, which, it was hoped, might secure the rule to the Ghibelines. In conformity with its provisions, each city that became a party to the confederacy was to furnish a certain number of men for the common defence, that thus the strength of the whole might be consolidated. On the establishment of this compact, the German troops returned to the emperor, and Guido Novello, having taken the oath of obedience to Manfred, was invested with the government of the almost decimated city. The consistency which day by day added strength to the Ghibelines as a consequence of the *Taglia*, soon made them masters of the still remain-

ing places in which their humbled rivals had sought an asylum. Lucca itself passed into their hands, and then in Tuscany no single spot remained on which this numerous body of exiles could assemble in safety. Rejected, therefore, by every community, they wandered through Italy, exciting even less compassion for their misfortunes than admiration for their fortitude. Wherever a civil quarrel on the ground of imperial or papal adherence distracted a state, though out of Tuscany, these adventurers, now reckless from the absence of all hope, appeared still in aid of the principle for which they had so long contended, and for which they had suffered so much.

It had been the boast of this party that the contests which they had heretofore carried on against the opposite faction had been for the defence of the national liberty, while the Ghibelines had sought to transfer the independent government of the citizens to the hands of a foreign master. But, with whatever sincerity they might at first have urged this claim to respect, they were now to show how pernicious, in the annihilation of all moral ordinances, was the supremacy of that power whose temporal interests they had identified with the preservation of their liberties.

The popes had already exhausted the strength of their thunders against the German emperors, and the terrors of the Vatican were beginning fast to lose their efficacy with the stubborn race of Suabia. But a new claimant to power in Italy was preparing himself beyond the Alps; and the pope with his party had the disgrace of abandoning the great principle which seemed till then involved in their quarrel, and of inviting a foreign army into Italy to contend with other foreign competitors for her crown, the reward of their valour, or, like the liberty of her people, the sport of their varying fortunes.

Charles of Anjou, Count of Provence and brother to the king of France, repaired, on this invitation to

Rome, and the struggle was with his invasion to commence, which has since left all Italy

“Conqueror or conquered, still the slave of friend or foe.”

If the German emperors had been oppressors of Italian liberty, the popes were now its betrayers ; and from this first example we may date the origin of that system in which Italy was but the propitiatory offering in the wars of foreign states, and which left her destitute of every right and every power, a make-weight in the scale to preserve the fantastic balance contrived by the holy alliance, when, in 1815, the one half of Europe was apportioned as the spoils of oppressive and dishonest war by the other ; thus placing her again in the hands of that power from which she was only released six hundred years before, at an expense of blood that humanity, in any other cause, would be shocked to contemplate.

The fate of Manfred decided that of Italy, and the kingdom of Sicily passed on his death into the possession of Charles of Anjou. In the victorious army the Florentine Guelphs had been particularly conspicuous, and their restoration was scarcely opposed by the Ghibelines. Count Guido was still at the head of the administration, but no decided hostility had been manifested in the recent contest on his part to justify the French adventurers in requiring his renunciation of office. It was only, therefore, by degrees that the Guelphs could expect to participate in the government.

About this time there appeared in Florence, for the professed purpose of healing her dissensions, a society of men called *Frati Godenti*, to two of whom was entrusted the office of restoring peace to the divided city. These friars united, in a great measure, the offices of priests and of soldiers ; but their fundamental principle of association was the righting of injury and the establishment of peace. They were received by the wearied citizens with open arms, and every facility was

put in their possession for the accomplishment of their object. Their first measure was in conformity with the spirit of the people, and the republic seemed in no danger from their ministry. They selected thirty-six citizens indifferently, Guelphs and Ghibelines, to constitute a council; and the whole internal form of the civil policy was changed by order of this joint commission.

The entire population was divided into seven orders, called, on the creation of five inferior, the *greater*, consisting of the different professions exercised in the city in the order of their respectability. Each of these had its peculiar rights, with special obligations to correspond to them, which it was made the duty of all to defend and perform. But the reformers of the state thus chosen, as it was pretended, equally from the opposite parties, very soon inclined towards the dominant power; and, perhaps, it was even unreasonable to expect that the pacificators themselves should lay aside entirely the prepossessions which, as soldiers of the church, they must have entertained. The Ghibelines were soon made to feel the declining condition of their state, and the Guelphs became again sole masters in Florence and rulers in Tuscany. If they engaged in a contest, the fruits of their victory were collected into a fund for the support of the faction, which from this time became as one with the government. The care and administration of this fund was entrusted for three months to three of the heads of the city *sixths* or wards, after which the charge was transferred to the other three, until it was found that the power of these officers was degenerating into a domestic despotism. The first appearance of an abuse of power was promptly met by the people, and the reaction was salutary in the establishment of a more democratic constitution of the government. Twelve Ancients, a council of eighty from the heads of the orders, or arts and trades, and a still more popular body of three hundred, whose intervention was required for the

enactment of every law, protected the citizens from hasty and oppressive legislation.

The sole hope of the Ghibelines now rested on the arms of Conradin, the last claimant of the line of Swabia to the empire and the kingdom of Italy. The defeat and death of this interesting prince bore consternation among his dependents; and the forbearance of the Guelphs in Tuscany, which had been exercised through policy, now gave place to uncompromising proscription. Magnanimity can form no part of the characteristic of a government, without impeachment of its discretion, till that political millennium when the affairs of a nation can be conducted towards the greatest good without a partial inclination to ill.

In the general rising of the Ghibelines in favour of young Conradin, the Sanese had been among the foremost; on the failure, consequently, of his enterprize, the first condition of peace imposed on them by the victorious Guelphs was the expulsion of all the Ghibelines, who had congregated in numbers within their walls. Of this number were the sons of Farinata, and Florence had not forgotten the slaughter of Monteperti. Azolino degli Uberti was not ignorant of the greater offence which sentenced him and his family to the severest infliction of Florentine revenge. On his way to the place of execution, "I go to pay the debt of my father," said the young man with all the spirit of Farinata. In the year 1270, Pisa, which had been most constant to the imperial cause, was compelled, as Siena had been before, to purchase safety by the renunciation of her principles; and thus the first chapter of the bloody history of Guelph and Ghibeline controversy in Tuscany was brought to an end.*

* "Authors differ much as to the origin of the names by which these factions were distinguished. Some deduce them from two brothers, who were Germans, the one called Guelph, and the other Gibel, who being the partizans of two powerful families in Pistoia, the Panciatichi and the Cancellieri, then at enmity with each other, were

The cause of the church had prospered by the arms of Charles of Anjou; but the singular relations in which, as a temporal power, the Roman court had placed itself, deprived it of all power to reward the benevolences by which it was sustained. When the Angevine prince of Naples had accomplished the views of the papacy by depression of the Ghibelines, his influence might become as alarmingly dangerous to the temporal interests of the church as the claims of the emperors had been; wherefore we may believe that the Sicilian revolt, known as the Vespers of Palermo, which deprived the prince of Provence of all dominion in Italy, was the last and strongest cement of his union with the pope.

We have not heretofore mentioned among the cities that adhered to the party of the emperor the Aretine aristocracy or republic, for its political system partook almost equally of either form. About the period, however, of the Sicilian revolt, when, with the decline of his power, king Charles was less able to afford her substantial assistance, the Aretines appeared to contest with the city of Florence, if not her supremacy, at least her pretensions to universal dominion in Tuscany. The Guelphs assembled in throngs from all the principal cities; and except, perhaps, at Monteperti, had never appeared in greater numbers than at Campaldino, where the citizens of Arezzo, though of infinitely smaller force, prepared to receive them. In this bat-

the first occasion of these titles having been given to the discordant factions. Others, with more probability, derive them from Guelph or Guelphone, duke of Bavaria, and Gibello, a castle where his antagonist, the emperor Conrad III. was born; in consequence of a battle between Guelph and Henry the son of Conrad, which was fought (according to Mini, in his *Defence of Florence*, p. 48.) A. D. 1138. Others assign to them an origin yet more ancient; asserting, that at the election of Frederic I. to the Empire, the electors concurred in choosing him, in order to extinguish the inveterate discords between the Guelphs and Ghibelines, that prince being descended by the paternal line from the Ghibelines, and by the maternal from the Guelphs."

tle, on the side of the Guelphs were two remarkable personages, both conspicuous in their day for the parts which they sustained before their countrymen. One, indeed, for a series of years directed, and not unfrequently excited, the factious broils that destroyed the internal tranquillity of his country, and appeared before his age as by far the more imposing character; the second was principally engaged in attempting to soften the asperities by which the opposite parties distinguished themselves, and acquired more hatred than fame among his contemporaries: but posterity has revenged him upon his age, and while scarcely the names of his rivals or colleagues have been preserved, each day extends our acquaintance with the name, and magnifies our admiration of the genius of Dante Alighieri. Yet Corso Donati was not without his singular merit; and according to the wants and the character of the times he provided them with all that the influence of an individual can bestow, at a period in which the political and moral world were, as it may be said, new forming, and when present influences left no impression on the shifting surface of the subsiding chaos.

Notwithstanding the immense disparity of force, the Aretines for a long time maintained their position, and, at times, even threatened the destruction of the Florentines and their allies. Corso Donati, then Podestà of Pistoia, a Florentine by birth and affection, had been posted with his Pistoians off the field as a *corps de reserve*, and Amerigo of Narbonne, apprehending the impetuosity of his character, had forbidden him, under pain of death, without express command, to engage in the battle. This inexperienced commander soon saw his numerous army retire before the resistless fury of the Aretine attack, and, forgetful of the body of reserve, seemed about to give way. From the situation in which he had been placed, Corso Donati beheld the impending ruin, and resolved to avert it. Turning to

his soldiers, he exclaimed, "we have been required to wait an order for engaging in this contest; our army is on the point of flight; it is flying now, and we have not yet received our orders. Well then, let us save our country; let us assist our countrymen, and let them afterwards accuse us; let those whom we shall have saved from destruction appear and accuse us, if they will, at Pistoia." His appeal was answered by the rush of his army to battle; and Corso Donati alone prevented the plains of Campaldino from becoming another Arbia to the Guelphs of Tuscany. The principal leaders of the other side were left upon the field, and the Florentines returned triumphantly to their city; but Arezzo still held out, and was still a partial refuge to the banished Ghibelines.

To this war succeeded another, in which the Florentines, Lucchese, and Genoese, combined for a decisive blow against the declining state of the Pisan commonwealth. But, though unbending and ambitious still, the Pisans had wasted their strength in their frequent wars; and the seafight of Meloria, in which they had been terribly worsted by the Genoese, forever broke the vigour of their hopes and their power.

The Pisans and Aretines subdued, and Florence freed from danger from without, the turbulences that characterized her various forms of government began again to display themselves. It is remarkable, that as the strength of a commonwealth increases with the violence of party by which its interests are divided and sustained, the aristocratic influence is in the same proportion exposed by the operation of similar causes; thus the political divisions of the Florentines presented no obstacle to the prosperity of Florence, the increase of her power, and the extension of her territory; but the divided nobility were unable, under the most favourable circumstances, to resist the popular impulse in favour of social no less than political liberty. The authority of this class had been greatly extended by the

zeal and the courage which its leading members had displayed. The laws were silent for a time in their favour, and the commonalty were only regarded as having political and civil rights, reciprocal and equal as among individuals of one order, but not in opposition to the superior pleasures of a higher denomination. While the privileged order, however, was firmly united in the assertion of its prerogatives against the commonalty, it was, on the other hand, distracted by the efforts of individuals to gain the ascendancy among their peers. Taking advantage of this division, the people were easily in a condition to reassert their liberty and maintain the integrity of their civil equality.

It had formerly been necessary to register the name of each individual as a member of the professional body to which he belonged, and the registry had been considered evidence of the exercise of any given trade, or, as they termed it, art. The people now assembled tumultuously, under the conduct of Giano della Bella, and demanded a revision of this regulation. They insisted that the priors of the different arts should be chosen only from among those by whom those arts were publicly professed and habitually exercised. The nobility were thus deprived of eligibility to this office, which, at the same time, was rendered of paramount importance and accumulated authority, the priors being the proper executive representatives of the city sixths. A general head, however, to be similarly of popular creation and equally responsible, was felt to be wanting; and this opportunity was eagerly seized, of instituting one on the most democratic principles. The priors were ordered to select from one of the wards an officer, who should, for the term of two months, command the militia of the republic and see that its interests sustained no injury. To his care was to be entrusted the national ensign, and he was called from this charge, the *Gonfaloniere*. Being elected but for two months, this officer might be chosen in the course of

one year once from each of the city divisions ; but the popular constitutions of the electoral college rendered it improbable that any individual of the class of nobles should be chosen to the newly-created dignity. The disqualifications and vexations of the aristocracy were not now confined to the ineligibility of its members. Public accusations, involving the character and the property of the most distinguished of this order, were lightly entertained ; and every facility was granted to those who sought for the security of disguise or concealment in preferring them, till at last it was deemed sufficient evidence against a nobleman that the general report pronounced him criminal, or the general opinion suspected his virtue. Yet the power of the aristocracy, thus amenable to the severity of the laws, was often enabled by ancient influence to violate its provisions ; and while the democratic institutions prevailed to mark the political tendency of the day, the personal influence of the aristocracy not unfrequently succeeded against it as an effect and in testimony of the institutions that were passing away.

Corso Donati, the hero of Campaldino, became now no less distinguished for his boldness in the exercise of his restless spirit, among the factions of his native city, than he had previously made himself by his daring promptness against the Ghibelines. In a popular tumult, therefore, in which a citizen had been slain, and in which, among others of his order, Corso Donati had taken part, there was no hesitation in fixing the murder upon him. The multitude clamoured for his punishment, but the judges were timid or corrupt ; and Corso, upon a mock trial, was absolved. Thus cheated of its sacrifice, the throng rushed to the house of Giano della Bella, by whom the popular interests had till then been uniformly and zealously sustained, nor was he in this instance untrue to his principles. But he had been in all cases the advocate and supporter of the laws ; he advised the crowd, there-

fore, to apply to the proper authority, and there to insist upon the due administration of justice and the law. In this the moderation of Giano was a conspicuous evidence of what might be expected from him if the public interest should at any moment require a sacrifice of his own ; for he was sure, in the course which he in this conjuncture pursued, of losing the popular favour, by which alone he had been supported against the aristocracy. Deserted for a moment by this favour, he found himself, in the hands of his enemies ; and they, who, if he had really merited the accusation under which he now laboured, would have been lost in his popularity and power, now publicly denounced him as a promoter of tumult and a firebrand of the people. This charge sufficed to present the patriot again to the popular party as the maintainer of its rights, and as identified with its interests ; but Giano was no longer willing to confide in the protection of his party, still less to surrender himself to the judgment of his adversaries, and least of all to make such a sacrifice of his principles as might have secured him their regard and support. He chose, therefore, rather to go into voluntary banishment, anticipating, in this measure, no less his own reputation and the peace of the city than the ultimate triumph and success of his party. This step, once resolved upon, was carried through with full resolution ; and though he might at various times have returned in little less than triumphal pomp to the city, Giano della Bella died an exile from the country whose liberty he had laboured to secure.

We have now traced the history of Florence through the feudal government of the marquisses of Tuscany, and her first efforts for liberty under an independent constitution, to that point at which we find her with that established form under which she stands forth to the world as the Athens of modern times, the sacred depository of that liberty, which, nurtured

among the dissensions of her citizens and supported to martyrdom, has passed to the improvement and blessing of lands whose existence was then unknown, but whose high destiny in the career of intellectual emancipation was then preparing by her spirit and her energy, and secured no less decidedly by her sufferings and by the sacrifice of her interests, than by the blood of those who have supported its cause in America or who perished for it in France. That the Florentines could not maintain themselves against the barbarous strength arrayed against their principles when their political creed, that promised political redemption to all nations, was preached to a world, whose faith, rooted in error was yet rooted in years, should as little weigh against them as the death of martyrs against their memory ; as little against their cause as the devotion of martyrs against the principles that supported them in death. The republics of the middle ages are the martyrs of that faith which has promised happiness to every nation, and which has realized its promise wherever it has been heartily received ; that faith which has now no enemies to fear, whose promise is now the hope of all mankind ; and which, founded itself on the revelation of truth, shall flourish for ever.

CHAPTER III.

The factions of the Whites and Blacks revive the parties of the Ghibelines and Guelphs.—Charles of Valois occupies the city for the Guelphs in the name of the Pope.—The Ghibelines appeal to Rome from his exactions.—The Guelphs in opposition to the Church.—Exposition of their true principles.—Corso Donati and Uguccone della Fagginola.—The Emperor lays siege to Florence.—Castruccio Castracani succeeds to Uguccone as chief of the Tuscan Ghibelines.—Results of his Invasion.—Choice of Magistrates by lot.—New organization of the Democracy.—War for the occupation of Lucca.—The Duke of Athens called to the Administration.—His Deposition by the union of the Nobility and the People.

THE departure of della Bella exasperated the people, who now perceived the latent object of the aristocracy; which, indeed, on this occasion they were not afraid to reveal. The law, which in all accusations against the nobles required but the evidence of two popular witnesses, had long weighed upon their order, more particularly as it was no difficult matter to find a thousand imaginary grounds of complaint against a body fallen into so unsparing an odium. As little, therefore, as it might appear in them to desire some amelioration of the statute in this particular, the people beheld in this desire an attempt to assume a dangerous license, and recourse was had immediately to arms. The issue was not awaited by the nobles; and when the nature of their demand was explained to the populace, it was thought advisable to grant a portion of their prayer, and in this manner to deprive them of all claim to such aid as despair might have suggested to them in case of denial.

At this period, A. D. 1293, Florence had reached an eminence from which she overtopped the greater number of the Italian cities; and in the peace which for a moment reigned within her walls, it seemed as if the distracted country had done forever with the fac-

tions which had torn her bosom, and made her fields and her cities the disputed prize of an ecclesiastical usurpation and a foreign despotism. The wars, however, of the Guelphs and Ghibelines were not at an end. Among the noble families of Florence were two remarkable alike for wealth and dignity. An influence unauthorized by law, but the natural attendant of an elevated rank sustained by influence, at various moments gave to each of these a jealous preponderance ; and suspicion on either side was always ready to break forth into tumult and war.

At the same time, in the neighbouring city of Pisa was raging a feud which had already resulted in acts of violence and divided the citizens. The leaders of the opposing factions distinguished as the Whites and the Blacks, had been banished by the public authorities ; and, bearing with them all the resolution of hate, they were permitted to take up their residence in Florence. Those of the party of the Blacks who were thus banished from their native city, were received by the Donati with open arms ; while the Whites, thus compelled to seek out a countervailing protection, arrayed themselves to swell the party of the other dominant faction under the conduct of the family of the Cerchi. The first personal difference that arose between individuals belonging to parties so anxious for an appeal to arms, was sufficient to assemble on either side the whole of its popular interest ; so that very soon the quarrel of the Whites and the Blacks renewed the party wars of Florence and of Italy. Whatever remained of the Ghibeline side took part with the Whites, and all the bitterness of long-remembered hate was cast into the feud.

Till this moment, as Florence had been completely Guelph, the security of Rome has been maintained against the Empire in the allegiance of this city with its preponderating influence throughout all Tuscany. It could not be pleasing, consequently, to the pope, to

see his old enemies thus forced into the field from which they appeared to have retired without the least intention of trying its hazard again. He eagerly availed himself, therefore, of the petition of the citizens and authorities, to despatch an envoy to the divided city; but the legate, come to preach peace to parties having staked their all upon the issue of battle, found even the name of religion of no avail. He could but place on the city and the citizens the bann of the church, and return to the Vatican, whose thunders now resounded for the first time unregarded by the rebellious Florentines. This resistance to the will of Rome, then at the summit of her power and swaying with an iron rod the monarchs of nations, indicates sufficiently the strength and importance to which Florence had arisen in so short a period of republican rule. The city itself contained a population of thirty thousand men furnished with arms, and accustomed and able to use them, together with sixty thousand more from the neighbouring country which acknowledged her jurisdiction.

The unsuccessful effort of the church to re-establish harmony among the people had excited the fears of that party, which felt that, however able for a time to resist, it must succumb in the end. This party, at the head of which was Corso Donati, united, therefore, at last, with the signory, and clamoured for peace. In the council of the authorities it was resolved, that as Pistoia had relieved herself of her factions by banishment of the principal factionaries, it now became the duty of Florence to send forth in like manner the disturbers of her peace, and thus to give rest to her citizens and efficacy to her laws. To the part which he bore in the promoting of this measure, Dante owed his exile and his sufferings; and to them the world acknowledges the immortal debt of the *Divina Commedia*. The rigour of this measure certainly fell with most severity upon the Cerchi and the heads of the Whites, inasmuch as they were then more powerful

than their enemies ; but it was soon discovered that the enforcement of the law against them was to be an idle show, and that all the offices of the city government were to be placed in the hands of their friends. Corso Donati on this betook himself to Rome, to implore again the assistance of its holy father ; but he sought not now the spiritual weapons which had been found so unavailing before.

Charles of Valois, surnamed Lackland, brother to the king of France, was then in Italy, and, receiving the pope's commission, he departed for Florence to heal its differences and restore the unanimity so necessary to the preservation of the papal interests. On his way thither he was preceded by Corso Donati, who, relying on the aid of Charles, had already planned and determined his work of ambition and revenge. The insolence of the Cerchi in the exercise of their power had disgusted the Florentines, so that their enemies were easily admitted by the people, who were fain to hope for better things ; even the rulers themselves, as they professed to belong to the party of the Guelphs, were unable to deny an entrance to Charles, the acknowledged head of that party. On the one hand, then, the Blacks, under Donati, were welcomed by the citizens ; while Charles, their protector, was placed without opposition in possession of a dictatorial authority. In a moment Florence wore an altered look ; for five days the work of devastation continued ; and while the victorious and revengeful Blacks were tearing down the houses of their adversaries, the papal mediator occupied himself in seizing and appropriating the public treasure and extorting the dues of the treasury. With this blow the Blacks remained masters, and almost the sole occupants, of the city ; for those of the opposite party who were not expelled by them, were glad to assume the badge of their conquerors.

Like the banished Guelphs, the Ghibelines or Whites now betook themselves to Rome, and pointed

to his superior the atrocities of the vicar who had been commissioned by him to give tranquillity to Florence. Boniface, really desirous of establishing order among a people who had so long and so faithfully adhered to the cause of the church, and who might yet be necessary to its interests, delegated the cardinal Matteo d'Acqua Sparta to supersede his military lieutenant, and once more to try the effect of spiritual arms.

All the eloquence, however, all the piety and all the influence of the cardinal, proved of no avail; the power of Rome against its pertinacious adherents was reduced to work by stratagem, and the resistance of the obstinate Florentines prevailed at last against the force which the secret machinations of the church had assembled against them.

Then, indeed, the true principles of the citizens of Florence first clearly developed themselves; and Boniface learned, that in all the conflicts sustained by them for the church, they had but assumed her ensign as the badge of their independence, and as significant of their opposition to the imperial pretensions. Determined still to restore, if possible, the peace of the city, and by union of the parties to consolidate his strength in Tuscany, Pope Benedict XI. resolved upon despatching, yet once again, a legate to this unmanageable people, with instructions to use all means of effecting the return of the proscribed and banished Whites. For this important mission he selected the cardinal da Prato, who naturally inclined towards the side of the exiles, inasmuch as he belonged to the families of many of its principal leaders. No one, moreover, better comprehended the importance of placing a check upon the dominant party in a state so devoted to the principles of liberty, even when that party sustained the interests of the hierarchy to which he belonged, and the advancement of which, with its members, has always outweighed every consideration of country and kindred. No sooner did the Florentines become fully

aware of the determined system of Rome to restore the exiled Ghibelines, while yet acknowledging the peculiar fidelity of the Guelph interest, than they also had recourse to a measure, which, without implying a renunciation of the papal cause, would defend them against its encroachments.

While the German emperors had always been held the natural enemies of the church, the Neapolitan princes had acted as its ally and support ; resort, therefore, to the protection of the Calabrian princes could not at any time be construed into a desertion of the ecclesiastical interests ; and as those interests were not now arrayed professedly on the side of the emigrants, the Florentines demanded the aid of the royal house of Calabria, and supplicated that duke Robert, the eldest son of the king, might be sent as the natural head of the Italian Guelphs to sustain the interests of that party in Florence. Thus, while Benedict feared openly to espouse the cause of the banished Whites, the Florentines, professing the warmest devotion to the principles of that policy by which the church had been sustained, now converted its most efficient ally into a means of opposition to its will.

For almost a century we see the civil state of the Florentines disturbed by intestine dissensions, and parties fighting under peculiar designations, which rather veiled than indicated the nature of their differences. The names of Guelph and Ghibeline, which her native historians have seemed to consider the bane of her peace, and, as such, the just object of unqualified anathema, were manifestly, with all the important interests attached to them, but incidents or collaterals to the great conflicting principles which must have torn a community constituted as any one of the early republics of Italy ; resulting, as may be said of them, from the issue between an aristocracy, which had sprung from among the heads of the various provinces as they fell or were conquered from the empire, and the people who pre-

served the spark of civilization which ignorance had quenched, amid the despotism of the world around. These principles, now in open conflict, arrayed the populace of the city against their proud nobility, and the restless character of Corso Donati impelled him into the spirit-stirring contest.

If, before, he had been the indefatigable enemy of that party which, under the name of Ghibelines, had covered the whole ground assumed by the aristocracy, and, under the authority of the universal church, opposed with unequalled courage the pretensions of a foreign sovereign to the control of his country's councils, he now as ardently espoused the cause of the people, when, in their own name and their own right, they were to contend undisguisedly with the nobility.

In the Aretine territory had sprung up a family, that from the most profound obscurity had, by the efforts of one of its members, arisen to an eminence from which to contend with the royal house of Calabria, and, having deprived it of a great portion of its lustre, to spread a popular tyranny over a large number of the most illustrious republics of Tuscany. Pisa, Lucca, and Arezzo, more especially had experienced the protection of his valour, and now groaned under the oppression of his tyranny. In the name of a republican officer, Ugucione della Faggiola governed the domestic affairs of these cities, and aspired to give to them under his authority a preponderance in the affairs of Italy, if not an absolute sovereignty in Tuscany. With the daughter of this respected but greatly dreaded leader, Corso Donati, the Florentine agitator, had been united in marriage. The hatred of his enemies waited for no better charge; an alliance with the tyrant of so many Tuscan cities was sufficient to excite the suspicion of the jealous Florentines, whom the opponents of Donati's party continually kept on the alert to watch his procedures and counteract his aims.

A hasty accusation presented to the captain of the people, sufficed to obtain sentence against him for aspiring to establish, with Uguccione's aid, a tyranny in the city in which his presence had been the cause of ceaseless broils. But Corso had no intention of resigning himself to the laws now administered by his enemies : he trusted to the favour which he had gained with the people, and he relied on assistance from his father-in-law. Resolute in the hour of danger, and accustomed to the arbitrament of the sword, he fearlessly appealed to it now. Though the charge had been one, and perhaps the only one, that could have alienated from him the hearts of the citizens, he still had a numerous party who adhered to his cause. With these he resolved to hold, against the civil and military force of the city, his own palace, which he had converted into a fortress. From the roof and from the windows he made a resistance so energetic, that the besiegers were again and again driven from the assault ; while in every sally of his little troop the bands of the besiegers lost numbers of their bravest and best. The house, which thus became the object of attack to the increasing throng of the populace, was connected with the adjacent buildings that were not in the hands of Donati's party. Possessing themselves of these, the popular leaders now found a mode of attack for which the besieged could not have been prepared, and which they could not resist. No sooner did Corso discover that the neighbouring houses were giving the command of his own to his enemies, than he resolved to abandon the contest, and to look for aid from without to re-establish his party. Cutting his way through the enemy with an impetuosity which belonged to his character, and which the crisis required, he made his escape from the city. However great was his strength within the walls which he now deserted, he became, when once beyond their circuit, an easy conquest to his resolute persecutors. His death was to them, in-

deed, not more an object of desire as satisfying their malice, than as their only security from the restless and irresistible influence of his character among the people.

The name of this individual, which history has almost forgotten, is worthy a place among the most illustrious that the early annals of the Italian republics can present ; he was, indeed, a promoter of the papal interest in Italy, and has the reproach of a reckless ambition ; he was a factionary and a despiser of authority ; but he derived his power from the proper source, and by his reliance on the popular favour, which he placed against the influence of the nobility, he kept before the people the evidence of their power, and gave it a preponderance by constant exercise of its strength.

The prosperity of the city seemed now assured for a time ; within, she had quelled the power of faction ; the democracy had assumed the sovereignty in the state ; and, under the majesty of her laws, the republic was consolidating her strength for an effort against the powerful league that the adverse principle of despotism was creating on either side of the Alps to crush the spirit of Italian freedom and annihilate the germ of universal liberty.

Unfortunately the Florentines had been too rigid in the infliction of political punishment upon those who had belonged to the weaker party in individual or local differences ; and multitudes of exiles were driven to invoke the aid of foreign arms to restore them to that country, which, had she been kinder to them, they would have died to preserve from the profanation of a foreign sword. The severity of popular hate and the infliction of popular revenge had disgusted them with popular rule, and caused them to look to monarchical government as a refuge from persecution. Among these was the author of the *Divina Commedia* ; and we cannot but regret the severity which drove from the loved city of his birth a soul like his, to languish

in the vain hope, and perish in the despair, of returning to lie within its walls.

“ Ah, slavish Italy ! thou inn of grief !
 Vessel without a pilot in loud storm !
 Lady no longer of fair provinces,
 But brothel-house impure ! this gentle spirit,
 Ev'n from the blessed sound of his dear land
 Was prompt to greet a fellow-citizen
 With such glad cheer : while now thy living ones
 In thee abide not without war ; and one
 Malicious gnaws another ; ay, of those
 Whom the same wall and the same moat contains.
 Seek, wretched one ! around thy sea-coasts wide ;
 Then homeward to thy bosom turn ; and mark,
 If any part of thee sweet peace enjoy.
 What boots it, that thy reins Justinian's hand
 Refitted, if thy saddle be unpress'd ?
 Nought doth he now but aggravate thy shame.
 Ah, people ! thou obedient still shouldst live,
 And in the saddle let thy Cæsar sit,
 If well thou marked'st that which God commands.

* * * * *

My Florence, thou may'st well remain unmov'd
 At this digression, which affects not thee :
 Thanks to thy people, who so wisely speed.
 Many have justice in their heart, that long
 Waiteth for counsel to direct the bow,
 Or ere it dart into its aim : but thine
 Have it on their lip's edge. Many refuse
 To bear the common burdens ; readier thine
 Answer uncall'd, and cry, “ Behold I stoop ! ”

Make thyself glad, for thou hast reason now,
 Thou wealthy ! thou at peace ! thou wisdom-fraught !
 Facts best will witness if I speak the truth.
 Athens and Lacedæmon, who of old
 Enacted laws, for civil arts renown'd,
 Made little progress in improving life
 To thee, who usest such nice subtlety,
 That to the middle of November scarce
 Reaches the thread thou in October wear'st.
 How many times within thy memory,
 Customs, and laws, and coins, and offices
 Have been by thee renew'd, and people chang'd.

If thou remember'st well and can'st see clear,
 Thou wilt perceive thyself like a sick wretch,
 Who finds no rest upon her down, but oft
 Shifting her side, short respite seeks from pain.”

In the midst of these difficulties, the republic stands forth with a sublimity in which all thoughts of her domestic errors are absorbed to challenge competition with the best days of Athenian glory, and to vindicate the character of democratic institutions against the power and the pride of contemporary despotisms. The emperor Henry, strengthened by the troops of Italian exiles that, hoping to be reinstated by his means, had flocked to his standard, resolved upon making yet another struggle to re-annex to the imperial throne the lost provinces of the peninsula. Many Italian cities were already in his interest ; and others, which would have remained neutral, were terrified by the report of his power to assume the badge of imperial allegiance. Those which, however, awaited his coming with arms in their hands, were crushed by his march, and his progress from the north into Tuscany was a triumphal procession. By a nominal submission, meanwhile, to the king of Naples, to whom they intrusted a species of dictatorship for their defence, the Florentines secured themselves an ultimate protection in case of defeat ; but, relying on themselves, they set up the banner of their liberties, and, flocking around it with resolute hearts, they waited the approach of their enemies. Having arrived at Pisa, where he received the crown, A. D. 1312, Henry planned the reduction of the Guelph cities, and advanced, by the way of Perugia and Arezzo, to within a mile of the capital of Tuscany, the great bulwark of Italy against the encroachments of his house. In the presence of this formidable array Florence gave no sign of fear ; she still left open her gates, and, trusting to the arms and hearts of her citizens, for fifty days she kept at bay the assembled strength of the Empire. Other cities resuming courage in this check of the emperor's fortunes, prepared continually reinforcements for the city, which thus was put almost in a condition to meet the forces of Henry in open field ; and long before the dejected mo-

narch found himself compelled to raise the siege, the Florentines had returned to their ordinary occupations, their customary pleasures, and even to their civil dissensions : forgetful, or, regardless at least, of the common enemy before their unbarred gates.

Henry thought it easier, at last, to contend with the monarch whose throne, though seated in Naples, might be said to extend its jurisdiction over all the states of Italy, than with the fearless republicans of Florence : he turned his arms, therefore, against Robert of Naples, and abandoned the walls before which he had received the disgrace of a contempt even worse and more subversive of his influence than defeat.

Uguccione, however, still continued in the field, and his increasing power still kept the Florentines in arms, and gave the partizans of the king of Naples a pretext for calling in his aid. On the arrival of his lieutenant, the popular dislike to the royal intervention burst forth with an impetuous violence, that soon convinced the faction by which he had been introduced of the impossibility of establishing a foreign and monarchical influence in the republic. Still an effort was made to sustain his pretensions ; while the opposition, resolved at all hazards to effect his expulsion, after having in vain resorted for assistance to the courts of the emperor and the king of France, obtained it in the person of a petty chief from an insignificant city of Umbria. Lando d'Agobbio was not a person, however, calculated to heal the wounds of the afflicted city ; and he too, after a short but bloody misrule, was obliged to abandon his abused trust. It is needless to insert an account of all the disturbances which now succeeded one another in the city ; confusion and party spirit were at their height, but the state went on in regular progression to the acquisition of power and influence.

Uguccione having in the mean while been stripped of all authority in the cities of Pisa and Lucca, Casaruccio Castracani assumed the conduct of the Ghibe-

lines throughout the Tuscan states. No greater name than his adorns the page of history ; and the progress of his arms, had he lived, might have placed the Tuscan cities under one vigorous government, and changed the fate of Italy. Beneath his guidance the Ghibelines again appeared upon the scene, but with a higher character than that which they before had borne as factious refugees or exiles from the cities which cast them forth as the disturbers of their tranquillity. The fear which Florence had not felt when the German Henry sat down before her walls, now united her citizens. Castruccio had laid siege to Prato, then in alliance with the Florentines ; who, impressed with the importance of at once opposing the progress of the Ghibelines, repaired in vast bodies to its relief. Unable to accomplish the reduction of the place, the Lucchese commander found it expedient to draw off his forces. His retreat again arrayed the factions which had coalesced on his approach against one another with unusual acrimony. The people were enraged that the enemy, who had presumed to brave them at their gates and who had struck terror to their bosoms, should be permitted to retire unmolested, while they believed that his destruction had been prevented only by the cowardice or treachery of their leaders.

An attempt was at the same time made by the nobles to introduce the exiles, who, on promise of being permitted to return to their homes, had taken part with the Florentines before Prato. The failure of this attempt was visited by the people with fresh oppressions, and the popular rule was triumphantly carried to the utmost development of its fundamental principles. It was pretended not only that every citizen had an equal right with his fellows to political privileges, but that the public offices ought, so far as they were a burthen, to be borne by all ; or, inasmuch as they were stations of honour or profit, that each citizen had equal claim to participate in their advantages ; and that it was not in

the power of a majority to set aside or to annul these natural rights. Whether election by lot, which in Florence was adopted as a practical deduction from these principles, be as wise an application as election by popular ballot, is another question ; but when every citizen might be a candidate, it was certainly scarcely less republican, and, perhaps, among a people whose rule and government were circumscribed within the limits of a city's walls, it avoided at least the possible appeal to armed arbitrament. "In the month of October, 1323," observes Sismondi, "the Florentines introduced drawing by lot into the nomination of their first magistrates. They ordained that a general list of all the eligible citizens, Guelphs, and at least thirty years of age, should be formed by a majority of five independent magistracies, of which each represented a national interest: the *priori*, that of the government ; the gonfalonier, that of the militia ; the captain of the party,* that of the Guelphs ; the judges of commerce represented the merchants ; and the consuls of the arts, industry. Each of these had a right to point out the most eligible citizen. The list which they prepared was submitted to the revision of a *balia* (a word signifying power), composed of the magistrates in office, and the thirty-six deputies chosen by the six divisions of the town. The *balia* effaced from the list the names of all those whom it considered incapable ; and classed the others according as they appeared suitable to the different magistracies to which they were finally to be raised by lot. Lastly, it divided the list of names by series ; so that the destined purse from which to draw the signoria contained twenty-one tickets, on each of which was inscribed a gonfalonier and six *priori* ; similar purses were prepared, from which to draw by lot the names of the twelve *buon' uomini*, the nineteen gonfaloniers of the companies, and all the other

* The Capitani di Parte were the elective heads of the Guelph party, three in number.

magistrates of the republic. All this arrangement was to last only three years and a half, after which a new *balia* recommenced. Still, in our day, the municipal magistrates of Tuscany are drawn by lot, in the same manner."

While the Florentines were thus enjoying their liberty, the great enemy of their state and eminence had advanced the power of their adversaries, Pisa and Lucca, to the rank of rivals with Florence herself. Unfortunate in the choice of a leader to oppose to Castruccio, they had recourse again to their former patrons of Naples and Calabria; patrons who had always mingled in the discords of Tuscany, and, in the name of protection, had rifled their allies, and struck at the foundation of their liberties. On this occasion the agent of their craft was Walter, duke of Athens, by descent a Frenchman, and by fortune a political adventurer.* His assumption of the regal vicariate in Florence kept at bay the army of Castruccio; but if the city was spared by his arrival the shame and sufferings of a foreign occupation, the signory and the people soon discovered that they had established among themselves a domestic tyranny. He was followed by Charles of Calabria, whose exactions in one year alone, A. D. 1326, cost the city the enormous sum of 400,000 florins. No sooner did it appear that the Calabrian prince was to be admitted by the Florentines as a party in the quarrel of the Tuscan cities, than the Lombard princes, who had long abandoned the party of the Guelphs, invited the Bavarian prince Lewis to enter Italy for the protection of the Ghibelines. This was sufficient to recall the duke of Calabria to the defence of his own possessions, which the victory of the Bavarians in Tuscany would have endangered; and the Tuscans, abandoned to settle their own differences, beheld with terror the progress of Castruccio towards absolute dominion among them. The reduction of Pis-

* A Frenchman by descent, Walter was by birth a Greek.

toia, however, which seemed the forerunner of that of Florence and the other cities that had resisted the encroachments of Castruccio, was the last achievement of that illustrious leader. On his return to Lucea, he was seized with a malady which put a period to his existence, and, with that, to the aspirations of the Lucchese, who had begun, under his guidance, to attain that preponderance among the Tuscan cities which they had not before enjoyed since the rule of the marquisses of Tuscany before the establishment of Italian liberty.

Florence had, indeed, a great relief in his death, which removed an enemy the most formidable with whom she had till then had to contend ; but it is probable that she was scarcely less rejoiced by the death of Charles of Calabria, which occurred shortly after, and which absolved her from an allegiance that might have been no less troublesome, and quite as humiliating in the end, as the advances of Castracani had been dangerous.

On their escape from so feared an enemy, and their release from a half-suspected patron, the Florentines turned to the reform of their laws. This occurrence depended among them by no means upon change of party ; it seems rather to have been the natural consequence of experimental freedom, where laws were the result of circumstance rather than the effect of premeditated reflection and wisdom. The old councils were abolished, and two new ones were established, with a judgment that might seem the evidence of political education and foresight. Of these councils, the most popular, which bore the name of the council of the people, consisted of 300 of the populace to the exclusion of the nobles ; while the other, which was to consist of 250, might be formed from all the various classes of citizens, whether noble or popular. To this reform of the state, and to the various requisitions which such a reformation superinduced, the Florentines applied themselves with all their energies, regardless of the difficulties which disturbed the other states of

Tuscany in consequence of the arrival of the emperor at Pisa, to gall and subjugate the papal pride. Even the creation of an antipope, which should have excited all the adherents of Rome to an enthusiastic adoption of her quarrel, failed to divert the Florentines from the exclusive care of their domestic concerns. Through all the contest, indeed, we scarcely perceive their influence on either side ; so little did they regard the interests of the emperor or the pope when their own were not implicated in the decision. After having been so long a leading party in all the wars of Italy, Florence now appeared perversely bent upon avoiding all collision with her sister states ; and when on the triumph of the papal party, the city of Lucca was offered to the highest bidder, having fallen from its eminence as an umpire state, the people of Florence refused to burthen themselves with a new war by becoming the purchasers.

No sooner, however, had an individual offered himself to pay the price demanded, and for a sum of gold secured the possession of that populous city, than the republic of Florence too late discovered that she had neglected a great advantage. She was now willing to contend for the conquest of those who had been offered to her, and whom she had chosen to reject for the fear of a possible war in which she might be involved by the purchase. As the defence of Lucca required now a stronger hand than its merchant chief could boast, the king of Bohemia, who had already entered Italy, was invited to assume the command. His arrival created a general war, in which, however, Florence took but little part ; her efforts against Lucca were continued, but so feebly, as to produce no result ; and, on the conclusion of the contest which the coming of the Bohemian prince had excited, the disputed city fell into the hands of a prince of the house of La Scala, the most dreaded of all who had usurped dominion among the states of independent Italy.

The Florentines now offered to purchase, for 300,000 florins, what they had before considered as too dear at 80,000 ; but the Veronese prince, into whose hands it had fallen, and who probably looked on it as the key which opened to the occupation of southern Italy, refused to ratify the conditions which he himself had proposed. Venice, Milan, and other Lombard cities and states, united with Florence to repress the ambition which seemed to contemplate the subjugation of Italian liberty ; but, after humbling the pride and destroying the hopes of Mastino, they tired of an expensive war, and, satisfied with having secured the independence of the Italian states, they separately concluded a peace with him, abandoning the Florentines to the necessity of resigning to Verona the possession of Lucca, or, to that no less painful, of wresting it from the powerful house of the La Scala by their own unassisted efforts and with their own diminished means. The expense of this useless contest had already amounted to the enormous sum of 600,000 florins. Unable, therefore, longer to contend, they were reduced to the acceptance of terms, and Lucca remained still in the hands of an enemy no less jealously feared, but more hated than before.

The peace which ensued but served to show to Florence the absurdity of the war into which she had plunged, in which she had been engaged for two years ; and which, besides exhausting her treasury, had almost annihilated her commerce.* Public credit

* The commercial relations of the Florentine merchants connected their interests at this time with the most important events in the political history of Europe. The following extract will suffice to show how closely their speculations were associated with the fate of empire ; and their influence in the political vicissitudes of the kingdoms of Europe adds dignity to the less extensive wars of their own circumscribed republic. "We have seen, in former reigns, that the Lombard merchants, residing in England, had great money dealings there, as well with our kings as with their subjects. They continued the same in this reign ; for, in the fourth volume, p. 387, of the *Fæderæ*, we find a deed or instrument of king Edward III. in the year

was shaken, and individual speculations had failed ; so that it seemed impossible to replenish the empty coffers of the state, while a scarcity of food was threatening famine to the affrighted citizens. In the midst of this disastrous prostration of her powers, Florence was visited by the scourge of pestilence, which in one year thinned her population, and deprived her of no less than 15,000 of her enterprising citizens. At this moment, the princely house of Verona, abandoning the hope of effecting a lodgement in Tuscany through the occupation of Lucca, declared that it would yield to the Florentines possession of its long-contested walls for the sum of 250,000 florins, which, in the depression of their fiscal concerns, they still contrived to put together for the purchase. Scarcely, however, was this contract effected, when the Pisans opposed themselves to its execution, by which they conceived that their own liberties would be placed at the disposal of their ancient enemies. Again the blood and treasure of Florence were to flow, and again she had recourse to the interference of the Neapolitan king, who pretended an ancient right to Lucca which the Florentines were prompt to acknowledge. Here, as before, the aid of the royal forces was invoked in vain ; the Pisans held out successfully, and preserved the independence of Lucca, while a just punishment hung over the indiscretion of the Florentines who had thus injudiciously introduced into their differences a monarchical influence, from which the death of Charles of Calabria had liberated them fourteen years before.

1329, 'whereby he borrows five thousand marks of the Society of the Bardi, (*Bardorum*) of Florence, for defraying the expences of his voyage to France. King Edward, at the same time, acknowledges a former debt of seven thousand marks. In return for these services, he presents them with two thousand pounds sterling, which he promises faithfully to pay them.' " This debt, and the failure of the English monarch to meet his engagement with those who had thus furnished the means of executing his ambitious projects, caused, in part, the disasters of Florence on the exhaustion of the public treasury.

The ill success which had attended the Florentine arms in this expensive war, and the general dissatisfaction of the people with the measures of the government, encouraged the enemies of the administration to hope for its downfall, and terrified its members into the adoption of measures for their security against the general odium. Walter, count of Brienne and duke of Athens, had acquired great credit with the Florentines for prudence and justice, when, as the lieutenant of the Calabrian prince, he for a short time presided over the city.* To him the administration now looked for support in the tempest which appeared to be gathering over their heads, and obtaining his election as general and conservator, with powers to administer the laws, they took from their enemies all means of passing upon their motives and measures in the disastrous period of their recent struggle. Of the three parties into which the whole population was divided, the duke of Athens was sure to find unhesitating friends in two. The nobles, who by law were excluded from all participation in the government, and the lower orders of the people, who were unable to attain those dignities which by law were open to them, and which the richer of their class engrossed, all thronged round the duke, and urged him to extend his prerogatives and seize an absolute control in the state.

There was no reluctance in the meanwhile, on his part, to avail himself of the favourable dispositions thus manifested in his behalf, which he confirmed by a variety of acts, all tending to increase the opinion of

* "The duke of Athens was of that degenerate race of Franks, established in the Levant, whom the people of the West designated by the name of *Pullani*, to indicate their small stature, their apparent weakness, and frequently their cowardice. To this physical conformation they joined the most unbridled love of pleasure, cunning, perfidy, habits of despotism, and contempt of life; the vices, in short, which connexion with the East necessarily communicates to barbarians, always more disposed to be corrupted than to improve."—*Sismondi*.

his firmness and impartiality. If a complaint were made of some individual whose rank or influence might seem to entitle him to indulgence, or at least to justify the duke in shewing it, he was certain to use the opportunity of displaying a fearlessness in his punishment which should beget no less awe of his sternness than admiration of his intrepidity and equity. John de Medici, whose family had already arisen to great eminence, and who himself had commanded at Lucca, with many others of equal rank, was made to feel the rigour of the law and the determination of its executor in the enforcement of its penalties, with a severity which the people could scarcely realize, accustomed as they had been to see the subordination of its tribunals before the appeal to the arbitrament of private arms. The populace were delighted with the infliction of these punishments upon the hated order, to which they bore a deep-rooted envy, even among all its legal disqualifications; and the duke now perceived, that in their favour he was secure from the opposition of those who might still be inclined to resist his assumption of irresponsible power. He made, therefore, a fearless demand of the priors and the Gonfalonier to be entrusted with the sole administration of the laws; and when it was resolved to invest him with powers similar to those which had been conferred upon the king of Naples and the duke of Calabria, for the term of one year, the people, who had deceived themselves into the hope of finding in him at all times a champion or a guardian against the pride of the aristocracy, exclaimed *for life! for life!* and in a moment the free state of Florence was changed into a despotism.

The full disposal of the lives and properties of those who had till his arrival been citizens of a free and democratic government placed in his hands, secured him the permanence of his half-conceded and half-usurp-

ed authority ; which, degrading as it was to the governed, yet found its zealous and efficient satellites. Those ranks and orders which had been most depressed by the popular sway, expected to derive from the arbitrary rule now established on its ruin, an influence as the acknowledged pillars of the new power, in the common opinion that the princely rank at which the new sovereign evidently aimed must depend upon a rooted aristocracy in the abrogation of the popular immunities. But Walter, who believed that the public mind was by no means prepared to receive a new system of government in which the long-feared aristocracy should be raised above the orders that, having long held them in a galling subjection, would now expect no forbearance, chose rather to rely on the foreign arms, which were introduced for the purpose of giving strength to the newly-established tyranny, and to be at hand for the furtherance of such designs as the occasion might suggest for the more perfect subversion of the republic. To the positive strength thus secured, the indirect influence of the ecclesiastical authority was added by the formation of the privy council of the duke, in which, among a number of church dignitaries, a single individual only was admitted who did not participate in the exercise of the sacred functions.

Yet from a council so constituted emanated measures of oppression, which the Florentines, yet unhabituated to the arbitrary administration which the duke of Athens had witnessed in his own country, and which he was now endeavouring to introduce into their city, manifested at once a spirit to resist. The private morals of the court and the officers, with which their new prince surrounded himself, served likewise to disgust the Florentines, and recalled, with indignant hope, the memory of those laws under which every one had been competent to defend his own domestic rights, and when every husband and father was unlimited in the control of his household for the protection of his ho-

nour and his peace. Now a licence of corruption seemed granted to the retainers of the duke ; and no redress, no right of protection or resistance, remained to the humble individual who saw the planned destruction or the accomplished ruin of that virtue over which nature had placed him as a guardian and a defender.

A common discontent began to extend itself through the city ; the nobles found themselves still excluded from those offices for the sake of which they had been willing to deliver their country into slavery, because the duke had no intention of disgusting the people by the elevation of their natural enemies ; while, on the other hand, the classes in whose hands the old authority had been lodged, could now with reluctance behold their utter destitution of its valued prerogatives. In this condition, when the heavy imposts fixed by the avarice of the duke on the community excited the general indignation, the discontented orders received new courage to strengthen the hope and the resolution of disengaging themselves from their painful and disgraceful thralldom.

The duke was not at a loss to discover the change which, in less than three months, had converted him from a popular idol into an object of general execration ; but he seemed to have no settled principle of conduct in combating its progress or its influence. Informers and traitors were not wanting to reveal to him the plots which were daily forming against his authority, and sometimes against his life ; but with an unaccountable caprice, at one moment he discovered the utmost indignation against those who, in the hope of reward, had preferred their disgraceful charge, while at another the merest syllable uttered in derogation of his administration was punished by a cruel sentence and an unmitigated execution. Three conspiracies at once were formed for the purpose of restoring the ancient rule of the democracy ; and the nobles were no less zealous than the populace in the resolution to ha-

zard every thing for the expulsion of their tyrant. Against this union of sentiment it was idle to struggle; and the duke of Athens, after having for almost a year oppressed the Florentines, and maintained his tyranny by arraying the jealousy of one order against the hopes of another, now found himself deserted, and compelled to abandon the city before the resistless impulse of a union formed for the defence of common rights; and the prostration of a common oppressor, in the spirit of liberty.

Almost at the same moment in which Florence cast off the tyranny to which she had inconsiderately made herself subject, the other cities of Tuscany were likewise liberated from a similar oppression; and, with Florence, for a moment exalted the standard of their ancient rights. There is nothing more apparently unaccountable in the wonders of history than the sudden disgust that, for a moment, appears to have seized even the Florentines themselves with the immunities which they had formerly seemed to value above all price, and which they could not have ceased to acknowledge as the primary source of their great supremacy in Tuscany. It was not assuredly that their prosperity had already corrupted the high character which had begotten their liberties and grown with the renown of their freedom; since, but a few years before, in the frenzy of all Italy for what it deemed the quiet and the splendour of *the government of one*, the Florentines remained the last preservers of that liberty to which the hope of nations was already beginning to turn, and on the preservation of which the destinies of Europe were for centuries to depend. If another evidence be required, we may find it in the almost instantaneous return of the republican spirit with which Florence resumed her independence; or in the extent to which, on its resumption, she pushed its principles in the establishment of her democracy. We have referred to the universal desire, which seemed for a moment to

have seized the Italian cities, of changing their free institutions for the security which they expected to find in the establishment of monarchical rule and in the administration of monarchical power. We have likewise remarked, that in all this misguided fervour the Florentines alone remained still constant to the principles upon which their interests had been founded—still the strenuous supporters of those institutions which had made them the wonder or the terror of imperial pride. The vast and multifarious events which occurred throughout all Italy, and in which this proclivity of the other Italians to despotism was so strikingly contrasted by the adherence of the Florentines to their early principles, require to be laid before our readers with that condensation which the nature of our work renders indispensable; we extract, therefore, the following comprehensive view of the state of Italy at that period of her history, when, on the death of Castuccio, the preponderating influence was restored to the Florentines. “The Ghibeline party, which had been rendered so formidable by the ability of its captains, was now completely disorganized: the Lombards placed no confidence in those who remained; they had forgotten liberty, and dared no longer aspire to it; but they longed for a prince capable of defending them, and who, by his moderation and good faith, could give them hopes of peace. They saw none such in Italy: Germany unexpectedly offered one. John, king of Bohemia, the son of Henry VII. arrived at Trent towards the end of the year 1330. The memory of his father was rendered dearer to the Italians by the comparison of his conduct with that of his successor; and John was calculated to heighten this predilection. He could not submit to the barbarism of Bohemia; and inhabited, in preference, the county of Luxemburg, or Paris, and having acquired a spirit of heroism, by his constant reading or listening to the French romances of chivalry, he aspired to the glory of being a complete

knight. All that could at first sight seduce the people was united in him ; beauty, valour, dexterity in all corporeal exercises, eloquence, an engaging manner. His conduct in France and Germany, where he had been, by turns, warrior and pacificator, was noble. He never sought any thing for himself ; he seemed to be actuated only by the love of the general good or glory. The Italians, justly disgusted with their own princes, eagerly offered to throw themselves into his arms ; the city of Brescia sent deputies to Trent, to offer him the sovereignty of their republic. He arrived there, to take possession of it, on the 31st of December, 1330. Almost immediately after, Bergamo, Cremona, Pavia, Vercelli, and Novara, followed the example of Brescia. Azzo Visconti himself, son of Galeazzo, who, in 1328, had repurchased Milan from Louis of Bavaria, could not withstand the enthusiasm of his subjects ; he nominally ceded the government to John, taking henceforth the title of his vicar only. Parma, Modena, Reggio, and, lastly, Lucca also, soon gave themselves to John of Bohemia. John, in all these cities, recalled indiscriminately the Guelphs and Ghibeline exiles, restored peace, and made them, at last, taste the first-fruits of good government.

“ But the Florentines, attached to liberty, and satisfied with their constitution, who saw a foreign prince, a Ghibeline, and the son of Henry VII. whom they had always resisted, arrive on their frontier, could not participate in this infatuation. They knew that, whatever might be the virtue and talents of an absolute prince, his government always degenerated into tyranny ; that, if he was not himself corrupted by power, his successors never failed of being so. Numerous examples in Italy, in their own time, sufficiently demonstrated the rapid degeneracy of the race of princes, and the profound pity merited by a people governed by the son of a great man. They were well aware that it was the municipal, democratic, independent constitu-

tions of the cities of Italy, and the constant emulation between them, that had given them such an immense superiority over the rest of Europe. They easily perceived that Italy, in spite of its division, had nothing to fear for its independence from its transalpine enemies ; while it had every thing to dread for its liberty, as well as for its civilization, from the immeasurable growth of an absolute principality formed within its bosom. The Florentines did not undertake to restore liberty to those people who had no longer sufficient elevation of soul to desire or energy to defend it ; but they pursued for themselves the noble policy of opposing all usurpation or conquest by any who pretended to domination in Italy ; and if they could not preserve to each city its independence, at least of maintaining, through the changes which time necessarily brings, the balance between the different powers, in such a manner that respect for the rights of all should be guarantied by the alliance of those who demanded only to be free themselves, and to preserve the liberty of others. This system of balancing the different powers in Italy, invented by the statesmen of Florence, was, during the fourteenth and the greater part of the fifteenth centuries, the fundamental rule of their conduct.

“ The Florentines did not find sufficient strength in the Guelph party to oppose the menacing greatness of the king of Bohemia. Robert of Naples was become old ; he wanted energy, and his soldiers courage. The republic of Bologna, formerly so rich and powerful, had lost its vigour under the government of the legate, Bertrand de Poiet ; those of Perugia and Sienna had within themselves few resources, and those few their jealousy of Florence prevented their liberally employing. There remained no more free cities in Lombardy ; and all those, in the states of the church, which, during the preceding century, had shown so much spirit, had fallen under the yoke of some petty tyrant, who immediately declared for the Ghibeline party. The Floren-

times felt the necessity of silencing their hereditary enmities and their ancient repugnances, and of making an alliance with the Lombard Ghibelines against John of Bohemia, with the condition that, in dividing his spoils, they should all agree to prevent the aggrandizement of any single power, and preserve between themselves an exact equilibrium, in order that Italy, after their conquests, should incur no danger of being subjugated by one of them. The treaty of alliance against the king of Bohemia, and the partition of the states which he had just acquired in Italy, was signed in the month of September, 1332. Cremona was to be given to Visconti; Parma to Mastino della Scala, the nephew and successor of Can' Grande; Reggio to Gonzaga; Modena to the marquis d'Este; and Lucca to the Florentines. John did not oppose to this league the resistance that was expected from his courage and talents. Of an inconstant character, becoming weary of every thing, always pursuing something new, thinking only of shining in courts and tournaments, he soon regarded all these little Italian principalities, of which he had already lost some, as too citizen-like and unlordly: he sold every town which had given itself to him, to whatever noble desired to rule over it; and he departed for Paris on the 15th of October, 1333, leaving Italy in still greater confusion than before. The Lombard Ghibelines, confederates of the Florentines, succeeded, before the end of the summer of 1335, in taking possession of the cities abandoned by the king of Bohemia. Lucca, which alone fell to the share of Florence, was defended by a band of German soldiers, who made it the centre of their depredations, and barbarously tyrannized over the Lucchese. Mastino della Scala offered to treat for the Florentines with the captains who then commanded at Lucca; and he succeeded in obtaining the surrender of the town to him, on the 20th of December, 1335. As soon as he became master of it, he began to flatter himself that it

would afford him the means of subjugating the rest of Tuscany ; and, instead of delivering it, as he had engaged, to the Florentines, he sought to renew against them a Ghibeline league jointly with the Pisans and all the independent nobles of the Apennines."

The war that followed the departure of the Bohemian king, was that which we have already described as having been undertaken for the occupation of Luc-ca. Thus the republican spirit of the Florentines, so far from having abated, was manifestly at its maximum at the important era immediately preceding their voluntary submission to the duke of Athens. We must look, therefore, to some temporary or local cause for that desertion of her principles which made the democratic Florence bend, for a brief period, her eminence to the yoke of a petty tyrant, like the other cities with which she does not appear to have accorded in her views of government, as is manifest from the part enacted by her during the occupation of so many Italian cities by the king of Bohemia. There is, however, a simple solution of the question resolving the establishment even of a despotism in the exercise of the popular sovereignty. The thought of slavery under a government of their own choice in the exercise of the most perfect freedom, the freedom namely, not only in the choice of officers, but in the creation of offices, appears not to have entered the minds of the Florentines; nor did they seem to apprehend, in clothing with inordinate powers a magistrate created by their word, that his administration could be other than the execution of their will. To check the galling pride of the aristocracy, they therefore called in, and invested with arbitrary authority, a foreign prince ; without the pretence of conquest, it seemed to them that he could never claim to rule but in their right, and that slavery formed no ingredient in their submission. They were therefore confounded to discover in a moment that the insidious tyranny of a false politician might be

as oppressive and as stern as the bolder despotism of a conqueror by the sword. Awakened from their error, the Florentines, by the prompt deposition of the usurper, vindicated their high and almost exclusive character of freemen among a world of slaves.

CHAPTER IV.

Annihilation of the old Nobility.—Establishment of the popular Classes.—Revolution of Rienzi at Rome.—Famine and Plague in Florence.—Permanent effect on the Public Manners.—Troubles with the Banditti.—War with Pisa.—Exactions of the Papal Legates and War of Liberty.—New Disturbances in Florence.—Commission of Admonition, and Council of Eight.—Admission of the lower Arts into the Government.—Michael Lando, Gonfaloniere.—Reaction in favour of the higher Arts.—Decline of the Democracy.—Usurpation and Conquests of Galeazzo Visconti.—Religious Companies and Processions.—Final Reduction of Pisa.

THE close of the year 1343 brought great rejoicings to Florence; with her liberation from the usurpations of the duke of Athens she had, indeed, lost many cities, which, having been kept in subjection by the terror of his name, now conceived the design of achieving their freedom in the weakness of their sovereigns thus reduced to the necessity of contending for their own. Yet the Florentines were not a people to weigh the loss of territory against the recovery of their liberties: and a feeling of compromise and mutual concession arose among the different ranks, which seemed to have forgotten, in the community of feeling and interests that had united them against the tyranny of the duke of Athens, the bitter feuds and the long hatred which had formerly kept them asunder. All that the nobles had contended for, and all that the people had most resolutely withheld, now ceased to be an object of contention; the one party being scarcely compelled to sue

for that which the other was ready to grant. The old city divisions into sixths were abolished, instead of which were substituted the Quarters of Santo Spirito, Santa Croce, San Piero Scheraggio, and Santa Maria Novella. From each of these were chosen three priors; two from the popular orders, and one from among the class of the nobles; while all the other offices were equally shared between these long-contending estates.

Into such errors are the people sometimes led by excess of feeling, and so far may the advocates of monarchy advance the superior claims of those institutions which they support, for never are the selfish counsels of kings disturbed by the warm impulses of gratitude and humanity.

Too soon, however, the mistake into which they had fallen was made manifest to the generous Florentines, and the ambition and pride of the nobility again arrayed them in civil arms against one another. Before the expiration of the first two months, the people were compelled to deprive the aristocracy of all participation in the government, by degrading from their offices the four priors who represented the nobility. They then elected a council of twelve and a Gonfalonier, together with a popular assembly, formed by a representation of seventy-five from each of the newly-formed quarters or wards of the city.

An idle hope now animated the nobles that the people had lost, in their temporary slavery, the dignity and the strength of republicans, which had so often in their former civil struggles gained them the victory. In this hope they resorted to arms. They had calculated, however, injudiciously; the appeal to an arbiter, who had so often decided against them, served again but to exasperate the feelings of that body from whose kindness they had every thing to hope, but from whose enmity, justly provoked, they had also every thing to fear.

After a long and bloody but decisive engagement, the forces of the aristocracy were totally dispersed, and

the irritated feelings of the victors sought for satisfaction in the enactment of a penal code against the refractory order, more severe than any which had ever been enforced against its incorrigible members.

They had learned nothing in adversity, and they returned to power with an unaltered hostility to all the manifestations of liberty ; but the principles of that exalting attribute had fixed themselves in the minds and hearts of the Italians of those days, and a momentary gleam of their primeval glories had lighted the children of Italy with a promise of the restoration of her ennobling pre-eminence. All the real strength of the nation was in the popular ranks ; they had all the wealth, as well as that active political spirit, which is necessary to prevent the love of commerce and commercial profits from degenerating into a carelessness of interests still higher and still more important to the happiness of society. With this real power, they resolved that nothing should remain of that factitious superiority by which the blood of one race was exalted in the public respect above that of another ; and imposing the most onerous burthens upon all who had formerly boasted a noble descent, they made them solicitous to bury forever the claims which they had ostentatiously gloried in before, and anxious to be admitted into the common class of citizens, who now were acknowledged as the legitimate fountain of honour and power. Crowds of the ancient nobility thronged to lay down their invidious distinctions, and to be received into the class of citizens ; but these, in their turn arbitrary in the exercise of their power, were slow to admit to their privileges the suspected class, who might seek to introduce themselves for the purpose of disorganisation into their ranks. Five hundred, nevertheless, were admitted ; but the punishment for any offence of which they might be convicted, was the condemnation to re-enter into that order, to belong to which was thus rendered an ignominy and a penal infliction.

The ancient distinctions which had been to Florence the cause of so much suffering, thus virtually abolished, it was natural that others should arise ; and consequently, those wholesome and necessary classifications which, as the fruits of industry and sloth, grew up to divide the rich from the poor, arose on the fall of the constituted aristocracy, and divided the people into the three still well-known divisions, of the higher, the middle, and the lower, classes. If now a murmur arose, and if the pride of the rich for a moment excited the envy or anger of the poor, it was soon remembered that even this was a profitable exchange for the thriftless arrogance of a pennyless nobility.

While the popular sovereignty was thus vindicating itself in Florence, a new state of affairs was dawning also in the illustrious city, to which all the various populations of Italy still directed their eyes, and still poured out their fervent vows as the mistress of their destinies and the arbitress of the universe. Though fallen, the name of Rome was still dear to the Italians, who remembered that she had made their beautiful country the seat of universal empire ; and when, under her bold tribune, her children sent up the cry of liberty, and reared again the standard of her early fame, the voice of gratulation rung from the Alps to the sea ; and the hope of a united people beheld the restoration of her old supremacy as a common triumph and a national boast. Nor did the vulgar alone indulge in the pleasing fantasy of hope ; the learned pedantically reverted to the classic pages for the language of sympathy, and paraded the names of Brutus and Cæsar before their modern imitator ; while the high-minded and enthusiastic hailed the return of the ancient glory in language which even now awakens sympathy for the vain aspirations of the noble hearts that panted and bled for human liberty in the early age of its regeneration. The most spirited effort of the pure and lofty mind of Petrarch remains to us a record of the bold at-

tempt which places the name of the tribune Rienzi beside the proudest of those who maintained the people's liberties in Rome, and writes upon his now unhonoured monument the name of the last Roman. It must be observed, that during all this period, in which the prospects of the Italians for a moment revived, the supremacy which Rome might boast as the seat of spiritual empire was taken away from her, and Avignon relieved for a while the beautiful soil of Italy from the curse of an ecclesiastical oppression.

In the midst of their political dissensions, the Florentines had suffered to pass unobserved the signs and precursors of a calamity which hung over their heads; and the terrors of which, could it have been anticipated, might have rendered them indifferent to all the interests which then seemed to them so vitally important. Excessive rains during the autumn of the year 1336 had destroyed the produce of the seeds which had been expended for the harvest of the following summer; and when the returns of that year yielded nothing for the grain which had been wasted on the unproductive soil, the people were thunderstruck to find themselves unprovided even with the necessaries of life. Grain, heaped in the public granaries, was hardly safe from the eagerness of the hungry mob, who, though they knew that it would be distributed to them in the most advantageous manner, yet, taking counsel from their starving fears and appetites, and terrified at the exorbitant price which the grain-merchants demanded for their stock, were ready to seize, at all hazards, the stores which the state was hoarding up in anticipation of an unmitigated famine. The strength of the municipality prevailed, and the craving populace, whose labour was now not worth the price of their individual support in the article of bread alone, flocked, at the call of the city-bell, to receive the miserable alms of the state-bounty, which consisted of two of the coarsest loaves

for four pence, and which 90,000 persons daily received for that sum as a generous benefaction.

In the sufferings of this calamity the Florentines looked not to its ulterior effects, and the desolation of distant countries excited no sympathy among a people groaning and fainting beneath the severity of their own miseries. In Egypt, in Ethiopia, and under the distant mountains of Asia, innumerable masses of a dense population were falling under the baleful influence of a malady, which, undefined in its peculiar characteristics, has addressed itself to the imagination of men with aggravated terrors under the name of the *Plague*.

In each place in which its awful visitation was made, it had assumed a modified character ; but every modification had been, or had seemed to be, an augmentation of horrors. In many instances, a slight or sudden hæmorrhage was the only and the instantaneous forerunner of the stroke of death ; and frequently a case of this kind was the first indication to a populous city of the presence of that scourge, which was, in the course of a few hours, to decimate its population, and convert every mansion within its circuit into a house of mourning.

Scarcely had Florence recovered in part from the horrors of famine, while her citizens were still enfeebled and reduced by the scanty and unwholesome food upon which they had been compelled to feed, when the news of the arrival of the Asiatic scourge upon the shores of the Mediterranean awoke them to the dreadful anticipation of a still more devastating visitation. To the anticipation quickly succeeded the miserable reality ; the gorgeous cities of the east had been clothed in mourning by its desolating progress, and all the west had received the poison, in the winds that seemed now freighted with contagion in every blast. For a moment the populace, horror-stricken, betook themselves to the ordering of their lives, and to the making

preparation for death ; to sumptuous living succeeded an abstemiousness which had been scarcely known to the famine itself ; but in a moment, as it were, convinced, by the increasing virulence of the pestilence, that all preventives were vain, an unbridled dissoluteness and libertinage broke out as desperate as the desolating plague. The ties of kindred were severed ; the mother beheld her infant perish, and never cared to place its lifeless form in sorrow on the bier ; and the rude jests and ribaldry of the carriers of the dead were never checked by the presence of grief or by the appearance of mourning for the departed. The sick were left to perish ; the fear of contagion had silenced the voice of nature ; and the names of father, husband, wife, and child, having lost all moral influence, were now never pronounced, except when some neglected and deserted sufferer breathed them out with imprecations amidst the agonies of death.

It is impossible, in the varying accounts which have come down to us, to say what was really the mortality occasioned by this plague to Florence ; but those who have observed the devastations of the recent pestilence, which, from the same birth-place, has extended itself over the earth, may estimate its effect in an age when the passions of men and the character of the times must have rendered them doubly susceptible to any epidemic influence ; and when the healing art could hardly have attained the dignity or certainty of a science. We may not believe that 100,000 persons in Florence alone fell victims to the violence of the disease ; but, as an illustrious historian has observed, the very exaggeration is proof of the extent of the mortality, and of the profound impression which it had left upon the minds of men. Among the victims, was one from whom we might have expected a full and simply eloquent account of its ravages, and in whom, indeed, we have found the principal authority for the preceding portions of our history. Humanity may feel for the

sufferings of mankind even in distant ages, and the loss of human life may excite its sympathy ; but literature laments the loss of one of its earliest ornaments more than the crowd of the vulgar, however the great and high-born may appear in the catalogue, and the votaries of intellectual worth select from the general ruin and embalm the name of VILLANI. The chronicle which this author has left of the early affairs of the Florentine people, written with the simplicity adapted to the character of the people and the times, remains to the present day a monument of the genius of its author, and sets forth in its style, even more than its faithful narration of facts, the history of the writer's life and times. It contains an account of the beginning of that pestilence in which Villani lost his life.

The pestilence passed away at last, and Florence returned to the ordinary avocations which had before distinguished her above the other cities of Italy, and among the most improving in Europe ; but the fatal effects of the moral poison remained ; the licentiousness which had broken in upon the purity of her ancient manners, had taken permanent root, and the simplicity of character which we have already observed as shadowed forth in the unaffected pages of her early historian, was, in a great measure, destroyed. The era, therefore, of the plague may be considered also a moral era in the history of Florence ; and if we might correctly call the period that preceded it, the historical heroic age of Florence, we are compelled to acknowledge the termination of that period here.*

In the general desolation produced by the pestilence, the public coffers were enriched by the fortunes which the annihilation of whole families left with no other claimant than the state. Returning commerce and an active industry soon filled the blanks which had been left within her walls, and the vestiges of the aw-

* See page 33.

ful dispensation which had visited her people disappeared in the prosperity of her remaining sons.

As a commercial republic, the true policy of Florence now began to develope itself. She had always been ambitious of holding the highest rank among the cities of Tuscany, and the jealousy with which she vindicated her supremacy had kept her armies continually in the field. Her superiority now acknowledged, and her equal laws the theme of universal admiration, she began to make that a desirable union which would before have appeared an intolerable subjection. Changing with the times, her government now became careful of the lives of its citizens; and the proper arms of a commercial people were found at least as successful in the extension of their territorial possessions as the more dazzling display of military strength. The fruits of commercial enterprise were used to gain political advancement; and a few hundred thousand florins, judiciously expended, united a number of towns and fortresses to the possessions of Florence. Even the important city of Bologna was offered for a price, but the Florentines did not succeed in effecting its purchase.

While a powerful state, under the Florentine government, appeared to be growing up in the centre of Italy, to counterpoise, by the freedom of its institutions, the growing tyrannies of the south, in the states of the church and the kingdom of the Sicilies; the northern cities, yielding to a new usurpation, were falling into the hands of a family which would have erected among them a still more formidable despotism. At the moment at which Bologna was offered for sale, the possession of these cities was enjoyed by one of the most remarkable individuals of this celebrated family. John Visconti had for a long time exercised, with seeming humility, the offices of a minister of the church; but the death of his brother opening unexpectedly to him the road to political power, he soon appeared upon the

scene in another character, for which nature seemed to have designed him with peculiar attributes. Active, ambitious, and enterprising, the archbishop of Milan may have taken the Roman bishops as an example for the assumption and the exercise of temporal power; and the cities which he held in subjection, made for him a dominion which might have struck terror to the states that contemplated the progress of his sovereignty. Into the hands of this ambitious prelate fell also the city of Bologna; and if the Florentines, mindful of the cost at which they had vainly sought by arms to gain possession of Lucca, now stood aloof and avoided a similar conflict, they were given to understand that it was not now in their choice to acquiesce, and that they had now to fight for the freedom of their own walls and the independence of their laws.

Misconduct in the management of their affairs at first seemed to promise little chance for a successful result in this manifest struggle for the last liberties of Italy. To temporary losses succeeded, however, the most obstinate resolution; the conviction that the political fate of the peninsula was involved in the issue of the contest, made the Florentines stronger in defeat; and the valour of his after-achievements redeemed to their leader the character which he had deserved to lose for his conduct in the early campaign. Florence had not, it is true, yet subdued the aspiring hopes of the Visconti; but it had resisted their power, which had wanted but the opinion of irresistibility to absorb the independence of all the inferior states, and consolidate, on the ruins of Italian liberty, a third domestic tyranny.

A glance at the condition of Europe will show the importance of this struggle to the destinies of the world. The enterprising states of Italy, though small in the extent of their territory, exercised by their commerce, and by the revival of arts and letters among them, a high moral influence over the countries which turned continually towards Rome and the Italian cities

as the mistress of their religion, and as still possessing many attributes of universal empire, connected with the name and memory of her former dominion. The very ignorance of the age, which enveloped in a species of mysterious awe the progress and the extent of her ancient empire, mingling with the superstition of its then actual supremacy in spiritual affairs, increased the influence which all her revolutions were calculated to produce upon the kingdoms of Europe. The republics of Venice and Florence, during the long night of political degradation in which people and nations were the transferable property of kings, stand forth in proud pre-eminence as the sole depositories of the vital spark of liberty to the world. Sismondi's just remarks on the usurpation of the duke of Athens, apply with added force and propriety to the contemplated conquests of the Visconti under the archbishop of Milan and the Conte di Virtu. No writer is more profoundly acquainted than Sismondi with the history of the republics of Italy during the middle ages; nor has any one more closely studied the nature of their institutions, or their remotest bearings upon the political destinies of the most distant nations and the latest generations. "As the rest of Europe was not yet ready to profit by the example and instruction of Italy, the slavery of Florence, the destruction of all liberty in the city which gave impulse to the spirit of inquiry, to philosophy, politics, eloquence, poetry, and the fine arts, would have stopped, perhaps for centuries, the civilization of the world."

The years that followed were years of confusion for Florence. Rich and powerful citizens began to shew the example of avoiding the honours of the field, as an unequal compensation, weighed with its dangers and its toil, by the purchase of exemption; and the proceeds of a great number of indulgences were placed in the treasury for the purpose of engaging mercenaries to undertake the defence of the city, or the prosecution of

its schemes of aggrandisement. All Europe seemed for a moment to have rested from its wars; and disbanded soldiers of every nation were seeking employment, which they could only find under partisan banners or in the commission of robbery. Bands of freebooters, constituting armies able to cope with the municipal force of the largest cities, were organised among the Alps, and threatened the formation of a new power within the range of those eternal barriers. But a sudden check which they received from the Italians, disarmed them of their terrors, and freed the peninsula from the dread with which she had begun to contemplate their permanent establishment among her children.

The strength of many of these companies soon rendered their command an object of ambition rather than a matter of disgrace. One in particular, surnamed from its superior daring, the *Great Company*, had laid under contribution the republics of Perugia and Sienna, and could boast that even Pisa and Florence had preferred the purchase of its forbearance to the possible danger of undertaking its punishment. At the head of this company was Fra Monreale d'Albarino, a soldier decorated with the order of the *knights of Rhodes*, and lord of no less than forty fortified castles. To the tribune Rienzi the Italians owed their liberation from this dreaded bandit; and the courage which exposed his headless trunk to the fury of the multitude that had quaked at the mention of his name, was hardly less conspicuous than that which in a plebeian braved the high blood of a race of nobles, whose ancestors had presided over the founding of the imperial city, and whose great progenitor had been before Rome was.*

Under the successor of Monreale, the Conte Lando,

* The Savelli family at Rome pretended to trace its origin to the time of king Latinus and the wars of Æneas in Italy.

new recruits added to the numbers of this dreaded band. For a moment they hovered from the summits of the Apennines over the territory of the Florentines; but the proud republicans, who had been willing to purchase from them tranquillity, were unwilling to acknowledge themselves under the necessity also of purchasing safety; they met the freebooters, therefore, with arms in their hands, and liberated themselves and their dependent towns from the fear of depredation. Diverted thus from Tuscany, the robber-troop swept over Romagna with a terrible devastation. Their greatest security was in the use to which their services might be put in the frequent wars of the petty republics, and even at times in those of states that needed not the aid of such auxiliaries. This it was that prevented such a concert of action against them as must have produced their instant extermination.

In a contest between the people of Sienna and those of Perugia, the aid of Lando had been solicited with the promise of abundant compensation by the Sanese. It became necessary, therefore, that a passage should be granted him through the territory of the Florentines. After much treaty, it was agreed that the republic should grant this passage by an indicated way, preparing, at the same time, provision for the troop at various posts. The free conduct of these forces was to depend upon their abstinence from violence or depredation in the territory of those who were not at war with the Sanese. Notwithstanding this engagement, the Conte Lando found it impossible to control the wild spirits which he was now leading to an engagement that might be considered at least as something better than robbery. They had too long been accustomed to depredation, and to consider that their own which they were able to seize. Their way, therefore, even after they had come upon the Florentine limits, was marked by all the desolation of plunder and pillage.

They had now entered a difficult country, and here

the infuriated husbandry, who had suffered by their devastating progress, appeared to contest that passage which the government had conceded them. A knowledge of the advantageous posts afforded to the assailants opportunities for successful attack in this contest, which no regular force that might have been collected against these desperate bands could have enjoyed. From the rocks, at the turn of every angle, at the entrance of every defile, and on the passage of every stream, the freebooters were met by throngs of armed peasants; posted at times beyond the reach of the weapons with which the robbers were equipped, they showered down stones, trees, and earth upon the heads of the astonished troop; at other moments they appeared before them in a running fight, till, followed by the devoted band, they entered a narrow valley or descended a steep and rocky hill. At such a moment volleys of rustic missives would thin the ranks which now seemed to have met that retributive justice which it had defied so long. Thirteen hundred horsemen thus fell into the hands of this raw soldiery; and Lando remained with this loss, severely wounded, among an infinite number of the slain of his band, while a great portion of the spoils which his troop had collected in all Italy fell into the hands of his rude conquerors.

When the news of this destruction of the freebooters was carried to Florence, the council feared to peril the lives of its hostages left in the possession of Lando; and the outlaws, who had desolated the cities of Italy and laughed at their laws, were permitted to escape. Thus redeemed from annihilation, the forces of Lando were soon reinforced, and new recruits again restored them all their terrible power.

The republic of Florence, which might charge herself with the weakness of suffering their enlargement when she might have given peace to Italy, was compelled to seek alliance for her own defence against their reiterated outrages. While almost all the other cities

of Tuscany consented again to become their tributaries, she, in unison with the Visconti, lords of Milan, with the Carraresi and the house of Este, resolved at last on their extirpation. Even the distant Naples sent her quota of men, and a regular army took the field against a troop of desperadoes, consisting of 5000 horse and 7000 foot, under the command of Lando, who, now cured of his wounds, added all the fury of revenge to the passion of avarice and the desperation of a threatening fate. For a short time the robber-chief, even in the presence of the numerous force now assembled against him, presented a daring front and pretended defiance; but unwilling, at last, to rush upon assured destruction, he passed out of Tuscany, and from this time forward his achievements, and those of his company, can scarcely be considered as belonging to history. The glory of thus delivering Italy from the troubles and the dangers of this domestic enemy, belongs, and has been conceded in a great measure, to the Florentines.

Still, nevertheless, the peninsula was not entirely liberated from their baneful influence; and the smaller cities, as well as the larger, received them as mercenaries for the purpose of defence or aggression. Large numbers were admitted into Florence, which was now preparing to perform a conspicuous part before the eyes of the world.

Before we enter, however, upon this scene of Florentine glory, it is necessary to give a brief detail of the conflict which the long jealousy of the rival states excited between Pisa and Florence. Never, from the first rupture between them, had these cities united in a cordial peace: nor could the destiny of the one be fulfilled but by the fall of the other. It is probable that a feeling, if not an understanding, of this necessity, imparted to the struggles of the Pisans and Florentines an intensity of bitterness unknown to the conflicts of the people of other cities, or to those of Pisa

and Florence, except when engaged against one another. But the fate of Pisa was drawing to a close, exactly in proportion as the rank of Florence was rising in the political scale. The famed Porto Pisano, the great object of Florentine jealousy, now yielded to the attack of its enemies; and the chain which had been drawn across it to shut out those who would enter otherwise than under the protection of Pisa, and, as if in token of its obedience to that state, being shattered, was carried to Florence as a trophy, and an omen of the speedy downfall of the destined city. Thus conquerors by sea, the Florentines were dissatisfied with the progress of their land-forces; and transferring the command from their former leader, they placed over them Pietro Farnese, with instructions to prosecute the war to an end. New victory now followed upon victory; the Florentine leader not only completely routed his adversary, but, having remained master of the field, he ordered the first act of sovereignty to be there performed in the name of his republic, by the striking of coins on which the arms of the city were placed above the emblem by which the Florentines denoted their rivals. No exercise of sovereign power was more decisive than this. We have already observed, that long after Florence had achieved her independence, she still acknowledged on her current coins the imperial sovereignty; and in England, it was not till late in the reign of Edward III. that gold coins were first struck by authority of her crown.*

We may suppose, therefore, that this insulting taunt of the Florentine leader was intended with a deeper

* "In the fifth volume, p. 403 of the *Fœdera*, we have a proclamation of King Edward III. acquainting the public, that his Parliament had agreed to the coining of three different coins in gold, the title of which act is (eighteenth of Edward III. cap. 6.) 'Money shall be made, and exchanges ordained, whenever the king shall please;' viz. one piece of the value of six shillings, being the weight of two small florins of Florence; a second of half that value and weight; and a third of a quarter of the first."—*Anderson's Commerce*.

view than perhaps his contemporaries conceived, and that from this momentary exercise of sovereignty in the territory of their rivals, the Florentines never abandoned the resolution or the hope of extending over them a permanent command. Their successes, however, which had been manifestly attributable solely to the skill of their leader, were suddenly interrupted by his death, when his former command was given to his brother Rinuccio, in honour, say the historians of Florence, rather of their deceased general, than from the evidence of any special ability in the person chosen as his successor.

An almost instantaneous reverse of fortune taught the Florentines the imprudence of their over-zealous gratitude. Their Gonfalonier had refused the services of the banditti, who now offered themselves in all the quarrels of the Italian states, and who thus became but little less mischievous than when, in formidable companies, they had arrayed themselves against all organised government. But Pisa had been less scrupulous. A notorious troop, denominated the *White Company*, had been received into her pay, and in the weakness and inactivity of the Florentine leader, these savage enemies took undisputed possession of many small places in the dependence of Florence. Retorting the insolence of the former leader of their enemies, they celebrated their victories under the walls of the panic-stricken citizens. In token of sovereignty, they also, in their turn, struck coins in the territory of Florence, by authority, and in the name, of the people of Pisa. Reduced to the last distress, the Florentines were obliged, themselves, to have resort to foreign aid. They remembered the valour which had delivered all Italy from the scourge of the freebooters, and the modesty which had refused the triumph proffered for so essential a service, indicated the leader who had then been so successful in their cause as the most worthy to lead them to victory again. Malatesta, however, had other views; and other motives than humility, had ac-

tuated him to decline the honours with which republican faith would, in rewarding him, have paid its debt of gratitude. An injudicious disposition of the forces entrusted to his charge, exposed the Florentines to new and continued losses, in which, however, Malatesta contrived to remove all censure from himself, and to escape as well the charge of incapacity as that of the treachery of which he was deeply guilty.

The Pisan forces consisted, in addition to the national militia, of auxiliaries collected from the broken troops of robbers, who had kept Pisa herself for a long time under contribution. The greater part of these were English, whose system of warfare was much unlike that to which the Italians had ever before been accustomed. An unusual terror seized the Florentines at their approach, after they had once experienced the cold resolution of their attack, and Pisa seemed to have conquered by the name alone of her soldiery. These formidable legions were headed by a remarkable personage, whom the Italian writers call *Acued*, or *Aguto*, in which it is difficult to recognise the name of *Hawkwood*. Under the guidance of this leader, the forces of Pisa were irresistible. In vain, perhaps, would Malatesta have been honest; but his treachery was little less than assured ruin to the cause of those who had placed their hopes and their defence in his hands. Having sacked and pillaged the countries of the *Casentine*, of *Arezzo*, and of the *Val d' Arno*, the enemy found themselves overladen with a booty which, in case of attack, might make their return to Pisa uncertain. They spread, therefore, industriously, the report that they would soon appear before the gates of Florence, describing the line of march they intended to pursue. The arrival of this report at Florence was the signal for collecting an undisciplined and terrified mob without the city gates. Malatesta had calculated the march of the enemy, and when he believed that they could not now be far from the spot to which he had ordered the

frighted band which was to guard the entrance to the city, he suddenly ordered the gates to be closed, and repaired to the camp at which he had hoped and expected to arrive too late.

Had the enemy in the meantime approached, the aim of Malatesta must have been accomplished in the total destruction of this unarmed and unorganised troop, devoted to death by the treachery of its commander. The object of the Pisans, however, was thus attained; for, while the Florentines were intent upon the protection of their walls, the spoils of the campaign were carried in safety to Pisa.

It now became impossible for Malatesta longer to conceal his want of faith or capacity, and finding his ends thus frustrated, he laid down the command which he had so grossly abused.

All the victories of Pisa had as yet been gained by her auxiliaries; the Florentines, therefore, determined to take into their pay such a number of mercenaries as might enable them to carry on the war with some chance of success. Here again, however, their enemies anticipated them, and the forces obtained in aid of the Pisans being earlier in the field than those which had been engaged by her adversary, the war was recommenced with prospects of an unvarying result. Inspired by successive victories, the enemies of Florence, perhaps, began now seriously to contemplate her final reduction; but they forgot, that in the midst of all their triumphs they had been fighting with arms in which the Florentines were stronger than they. The wealth of Florence, in a war of mercenaries, might be said to be in contest with that of Pisa; and the sudden withdrawal of the greater portion of the English troops from the service of the latter, placed the contending people upon a more equal footing, and revived the hopes of the desponding Florentines.

Galeotto Malatesta, who, notwithstanding the misconduct of his nephew, had been placed in command

of their forces, now resolved to carry the war into the territory of the Pisans. Their country, in the last campaigns, had been spared all the miseries of the battlefield by the intrepidity with which their leaders had passed the frontiers of the enemy, and converted their fruitful fields into a theatre of war. To an honesty superior to that of his nephew, Galeotto added nothing of his talent for military affairs. The good fortune, however, of the Florentines had associated with him, as second in command, a young soldier, to whom, in the moment of trial, Malatesta had the discernment and magnanimity to listen. The two armies met near the suburbs of Cascina for a decisive engagement. Manno Donati, the young Florentine, now, in fact, commander-in-chief of his country's last defensive armament, found himself opposed to Sir John Hawkwood, the most distinguished commander of his day. Nor was his country's hope in vain. The Pisans, long accustomed to victory, were now surprised at the fury with which they were attacked; the bed of the Arno became, for a time, the most desperate field of action; and the dead bodies which floated down its stream, might tell to the Pisan wives and mothers the first news of the defeat of their army in the bitter spectacle of the havoc which the sword had made of their husbands and children. Florence, long unused to success, could scarcely realize this victory. She seems, indeed, to have fully comprehended the danger from which it rescued her; and in marking as a solemn festival the day of its achievement, she declared the terror with which the triumph of the Pisan arms had impressed her, and gives, perhaps, the true interpretation to the zeal and resolution with which she but a few years afterwards designed the conquest of her formidable rival. The genius of Michael Angelo, in all the mighty themes which history and poetry afforded his pencil, equal to the mightiest, found none more worthy

of its exercise than this, which vindicated the glory of his country and secured its liberty.

Repeated losses had only nerved the Florentines to renewed resolution; and never, in the moment of defeat, had the thought of peace occurred to them from the fear of dangers to come. Among the Pisans, however, the single victory of their enemies sufficed to counterbalance all the hopes which they had founded on their own former successes. The door to an adjustment of difficulties being thus opened to the rival states, the prudent magistrates were resolved that it should not pass without avail. All that Pisa had accomplished was weighed against what her enemy had in this last contest gained; and so great had been the terror which this unexpected victory sent to the hearts of the former conquerors, that alone it was suffered to outweigh their many triumphs, and to give, in the conditions of accommodation, the glory of conquerors to those by whom it had been gained. Yet the Florentines were not satisfied with the peace which their governors now gave them; unsubdued in misfortune, they were yet elated by a sudden success; and their excited hopes believed that indemnity for the expenses of the war was less than a single well-fought day entitled them to ask, from a people who had threatened ruin to their state, and brought to their gates the devastating fury of a foreign banditti. The peace, however, was concluded; and, after a short time, even the Florentines were not dissatisfied to enjoy its blessings in exchange for the perils and the privations of war.

From this struggle we are called to contemplate the republic of Florence in a higher character than that in which she has hitherto appeared to us, but which the spirit of her people might have led us to anticipate on any occasion that might demand its exertion.

From the year 1305, the popes, who had found that their residence within the sacred city exposed them to continual danger from the turbulent ambition of the

nobility, or the impatience with which the Romans bore the yoke imposed upon their municipal rights, had kept their court at Avignon, and governed their Italian states by cardinal legates. The exactions of these ecclesiastical depredators were borne so long as they were confined to the cities in the absolute allegiance of the popes. But the wide field which the patrimony of St. Peter afforded for their rapine was not sufficient to satisfy their insatiable cravings; and, trusting to the deference which the Tuscan cities had always paid to the name of the church, and to the factions by which they were divided, these ministers of priestly rapacity directed their eyes and their greedy desires towards Tuscany. "Under the specious shew of papal authority, they extended their tyranny over free states; they took the banditti, with which Italy then swarmed, into their pay; and they justified the most execrable of their actions, when unsuccessful, by their master's orders, and when successful, by the plenitude of their own power, both which they knew to be indisputable. Their excesses put the Florentines to great inconveniences. They had always professed themselves Guelphs, and so artfully had they managed matters, that the popes had never been able to dissolve their constitution. The papal court and legates, sensible of the Florentine system of policy, durst not break with their state, and depended upon accidents for bending them to the pope's will. An accident of that kind presented itself this year. The Florentine state was afflicted with famine, through the sterility of the season, and had applied again and again to the legate of Bologna for some relief, which he flatly refused them. The autumn promised well; but the legate, determined to impose the papal yoke on the necks of the Florentines, sent a great army into their territories to prevent their reaping their harvest. The reader is here to observe, that all Italy continued still to be full of mercenary soldiers, and such were they whom the legate employed

on this occasion ; the Florentines, therefore, wisely resolved to fee rather than fight their enemies, who, for money, became their good friends, to the legate's great surprise and disappointment. About the same time it was discovered, that the legate had practised with the inhabitants of Prato to revolt from the Florentines, which might have been attended with the ruin of the Florentine state."

The proud spirit of Florence was excited by this insolence of delegated authority ; in a moment she quelled the domestic dissensions upon which the cardinals had depended, and almost in an instant appeared in the field prepared to vindicate her independence, and to bestow, on all who were desirous of obtaining them, the blessings which it had secured to her citizens. With the banner on which was inscribed the cause of her quarrel in golden characters, she sent forth her army, that, with the name of "Liberty" carried in its van, spread consternation among the enemies of its sacred cause. Eighty cities revolted from the papal rule, which had been their curse for many years, and to which they were unhappily again to return to fasten that curse upon themselves and their country forever.

The effects of this war were not without a striking influence upon the domestic policy of Florence. Two powers, for a long time in conflict, around which the different parties had rallied, represented in the state those orders which had so long disturbed the peace of the city ; and these, on the expulsion or destruction of the old nobility, revived the feuds of which the latter had been the cause at an earlier day. When the wars of the church and the Empire had arrayed with most bitterness in opposite parts the whole population of Italy, a commission had been appointed in Florence, having power, as *ammongitori*, admonishers, to warn all those of whom any suspicions were entertained in regard to the great principle in dispute, to avoid every canvass for any office in the government. The severest

punishments were denounced against any Ghibeline, who, being so warned, should refuse to obey. Of course, from its origin, this power was subject to abuse ; but when the parties, on account of which it had been created, no longer existed, it became at once, and was considered to be, an instrument of undisguised tyranny and private oppression. This power, long dormant, the ambition of party leaders revived ; and all of those who belonged to the class that had succeeded to the old nobility, were loud in its support.

The trades which, as we have already observed, were divided into *higher* and *lower arts*, now gave his rank to each individual ; and, according as he belonged to the more or less elevated, was the place assigned him in the social divisions of his countrymen. The officers of the state were invariably chosen from the *higher arts*, while the lower constituted the second class of citizens, who looked with no less contempt upon the populace than that with which they themselves were viewed by the members of the first. For a long time the force of prejudice and habit protected the higher orders and the *commission* in the exercise of their assumed prerogatives. With the name of Guelphs they executed, by their power of *admonition*, the most oppressive control over all who were in any manner obnoxious to their dislike. Of the old Ghibelines very few remained, and these had long ceased to be dangerous. The most influential of the leaders among the artizans of the second class were those whom the dominant party had now to fear, but these were altogether of too recent an elevation to have taken part in the former disputes of the Guelphs and Ghibelines ; and if their fathers had been engaged in them, it could have been but in the capacity of the humblest members of the crowd. Yet in their very obscurity the admonishers found reason for suspicion, and continual admonitions were issued to keep from office those whom the popular favour would have been certain to exalt to the highest

dignities. No sooner, however, did the war of the cities break out against the legates of the pope, than these suspected persons appeared to take up arms for the common liberty, and a *council of eight*, to conduct the affairs of the war, was appointed, consisting of individuals chosen from their number exclusively. The address with which they discharged their trust contributed greatly to exalt them in the general favour; even the acknowledged Ghibelines were viewed without dislike, and every attempt of the Guelphs proved unavailing to excite the citizens against them by the influence of a name which had ceased to represent a principle or a party.

Against the Guelph commission, which, armed with its dangerous admonitory power, had protected the rights of the *greater arts* now constituting the aristocracy, the *council of eight* erected itself into a popular organ, and, exercising a countervailing influence, soon placed itself in direct opposition. The *Signoria* composing the national government found its authority absorbed in that of these disorganizing adjuncts.

Among the supporters of the *higher arts*, and consequently among the advocates of the *commission*, was the family of the Albizzi; opposed to these, and, therefore, belonging to the *lesser arts*, and a supporter of the *council of eight*, in which were many of their family, were the Ricci. While these were looked upon as leaders and champions of their respective parties, many others began to take an active but subordinate part in the question at issue. The Medici, who had for some time been forcing themselves upon the notice of the people as the resolute assertors of popular freedom, together with the Ricci, aspired to the lead on the side of the people; and from this moment, A. D. 1378, the name of that family is a part of the history of Tuscany, as their intrigues were never for a moment interrupted in her councils or among her people, nor their agency suspended in the accomplishment of her destiny.

The first indication of an approaching crisis in the fortunes of the conflicting parties appeared on the preparation for the election of gonfaloniere. The *commission*, apprehensive of the choice of Salvestro de' Medici, had recourse to their right of admonition, and even contemplated reviving the ancient penalties against suspected Ghibelines. But, in spite of their efforts, the interest of the Medici prevailed ; and it was no part of their principle to treat with more forbearance the heads of the opposite faction. If the Ricci and the Medici, from the obscurity of their origin, could find no evidence of their descent from the Guelph or national party, and thus became obnoxious to the exercise of the much abused power of the *commission* ; the Albizzi and their friends, upon the other hand, had rendered themselves liable, by the assumption of superiority, and by the title of popular nobility which they had not unwillingly received from the inferior artisans, to all the penalties denounced against the old nobility. At this moment, however, all Florence had ceased to regard the ancient difference which gave its influence and authority to the *commission*, while the spirit in which the enactments against the nobility had been carried was now in full ferment. Of course the open means of offence were therefore exclusively in the hands of the *council*, while conspiracy and cabal were the only hope of the *commission* and its advocates. Uncertain of the success of any effort that they might make, the latter were timidly preparing an attack upon their enemies, when Salvestro de' Medici unexpectedly proposed a law in favour of those who had suffered by the undue exercise of the admonitory power entrusted to the *capitani di parte* who formed the *commission*. This law, at first proposed in the college of the *Signoria*, was met with strenuous opposition by a majority of its members, who could not but perceive that a new influence was thus to be admitted into the state. The Gonfalonier had, however, marked out his course. He knew that he

could rely on the people ; and he knew, moreover, that he had ventured his hopes and those of the party on the result of this enterprize. The moment he perceived that the fate of his law was sealed in the college of the *Signoria*, he rushed forth into the public square, in which the people had assembled in multitudes, and declared his resolution to restore into their hands the dignity with which they had so recently invested him. " For what," said he, " was I raised to this office ? was it to guard the state ; was it to correct the insolence of the great—to temper the laws whose abuse has brought the city to ruin ? Well, then, I have thought for the republic and I have watched over its welfare ! but, wherefore, and to what end, if I am not only forbidden to act in your behalf, but if you yourselves are forbidden to deliberate, or to hear the voices of those who would counsel you to your safety ?" The populace, among whom were scattered a great number of the friends of the speaker, prepared in anticipation for this scene, were impatient for the conclusion of his speech, which was terminated in the clamour of an enthusiastic profession of affection, and of a determination to support the liberties of the city.

If the *commission* had for a moment indulged the hope of victory, it now was fully convinced that every thing must be abandoned to the popular side. It had nothing to hope from resistance, and probably beheld, with some satisfaction, the tumult that now seemed to threaten the ruin of the *inferior arts* in the urgency of the lowest populace, which had scarcely before been taken into the account in the estimate of political parties.

Every thing boded a continuance of the commotion ; the shops were closed ; families hastened with their property into the asylums which were offered by the convents and churches ; no one appeared in the streets for any of the ordinary transactions of business : on the other hand, tumultuous throngs assembled in different

parts of the city ; and each of the *arts* were engaged in arranging themselves under their different ensigns. A new *Signoria*, appointed in this state of the public feeling, might seem to promise a return of quiet, or, at least, a temporary adjustment of difficulties, by dispositions made in accordance with the will of the malcontents. But the hopes and ambition of the *secondary arts* had been too much excited to be satisfied with a temporary success, or with a change of administration alone. An extension of the official franchise was resolved upon to place the *higher* and the *minor arts* upon an equality, and to admit the lowest orders in the state to a participation of its offices. A leader was soon found to their mind ; one who, while the first causes and authors of the tumult were waiting to make their profit of the earliest opportunity, in its subsidence, would indulge them in the perpetration of all the excesses which give to a civil commotion its accumulated terrors. The *Signoria*, aware of the irresistible power with which it had to contend, was anxious to treat upon such terms as the councils to which its treaties would be submitted might ratify. The people, flushed with their victory, were only willing to listen to such terms as they conceived their victory and their strength entitled them to propose. Among a variety of conditions which the orders, called respectable, must have found it difficult to admit, was one for the establishment of a grade to be specially represented in the *Signoria* out of that class to which no name had been assigned as practising no art, and which could only be known as the lowest ranks or dregs of the people. Severe a mortification as such an admission must have been to the feelings of the better kind of citizens, it was deemed expedient to allow it for the present, referring to the councils the full discussion of the question previous to its becoming a law. On the other hand, the populace engaged, that these proceedings being rati-

fied, it would quietly disperse and restore tranquillity to the city.

On the following morning the question came up for definitive settlement before the council of the commune, while the people thronged tumultuously in the avenues that led to the palace in which its discussions were conducted. Guerrante Marignolli, one of the *Signoria*, alarmed at the impatience manifested by the crowd, in order to avoid the necessity of committing himself on the question, or probably aware that the excited feelings of the multitude could not be allayed by any concession till it should have been satisfied by some appalling exercise of its power, and judging rightly, that in all such conjunctures moderation but represses and irritates the popular frenzy, attempted, unobserved of the crowd, to make his escape from the palace, and provide for his security within the walls of his own dwelling. But if he were right in his estimate of the popular feeling, he was wrong in indulging the hope of eluding its watch.

In such moments the most trifling incidents are sufficient to produce the most unexpected and the most terrible results. No settled plan of operations appears to have directed the mob by whom the decision of the *Signoria* was thus impatiently expected, when the person of Marignolli was discovered endeavouring unobserved to pass from among them. Instantly a new resolution appears to have actuated the whole mass of the multitude. "Let the Signory resign! let the Signory resign!" resounded through the streets of the city, and carried terror and confusion into the deliberations of the council. After a moment of silent consternation, two individuals arose, and proposed, that in accordance with the popular desire, the *Signoria* should dissolve itself, and each man return a private citizen to his own home. The movers of this resolution were persons who had been, in the commencement of the struggle, the advocates of the *inferior* against the su-

perior arts, and against their organ, the commission of admonition. Induced by the example of individuals possessing the public confidence, as it was thought, the whole body declared its willingness to comply with the demand of the people, and prepared to carry into effect their design. Two only of the assembly, standing up in the midst of their panic-stricken fellows, opposed the baseness and cowardice of the submission. "We have no control," cried one of them, "over the actions of our colleagues; but for ourselves, if, before the expiration of that time for which they elected us, the people wish to remove us from this hall, the seat of our just deliberations, they have equal power over our lives, with which only will we resign our constitutional authority. Let us return to our deliberations."

While this show of resolution was making within the palace, the crowd was urging forward from without. All thought of dignity abandoned the council in the terror of impending massacre; and the throng of the abdicators bore away even those two who would have perished for the preservation of constituted order and the laws. The multitude were thus left in undisputed possession of the palace, together with the *council of eight*, who had not yet laid down their authority. The palace of the Podestà had already been stormed, and the ensign of the state, which had been found there, was now borne by Michael Lando, a member of one of the lowest arts, and consequently among the most tumultuous of the rioters. Barefoot and in rags, which scarce sufficed to cover his body, he rushed before his fellows into the hall, and turning suddenly round, with the ensign waved above his head, he cried aloud to the multitude, "The palace is yours! the city is yours, and in your hands! what shall we do with it?" To this brief address the people replied that he should assume the command, that he should be Gonfalonier, and that he should govern the city.

Michael Lando, from being one of the people,

was aware of the error into which the magistracy had fallen in offering to treat with an infuriated populace, and in putting power into their hands while their passions remained yet unallayed. He knew, therefore, the insecurity of the office which they had just conferred upon him, unless he could satisfy, by some sacrifice to its rage, the craving which looked for a victim. For this purpose he ordered one of the creatures of the old administration, most odious in the eyes of the people, to be brought into his presence and into that of the multitude: and while, on the one hand, he satisfied the passions of the mob by the execution of a political offender, he declared that he vindicated the rights of the citizen in the punishment of one who had violated their dignity by the infringement of the majesty of their laws. The ends of justice were satisfied in this, and the policy of Lando justified itself.

The excitement of the populace being immediately allayed, the plebeian Gonfalonier proceeded to the reform of the state. In this reform the *superior* and the *inferior arts* were equally admitted to the highest offices; but, what had been unknown before to the government, was the admission of the mob, by specific representation, to a participation in the administration. The *council of eight*, believing that they had now established themselves with the people, were desirous of taking an active part in the reorganization of the political system: but Lando had no intention of dividing that power, which, he believed, as it had been conferred by the proper authority on him alone, might best by him alone be exercised for the general good. He therefore informed the council that he had no need of their aid; and that, as he intended to reform the state on his own responsibility, they might consider their office to have expired. For a brief moment the jurisdiction of Lando seemed to be undisputed and uncontrolled: yet, after a pause, during which the people had time to examine what they had gained and to under-

stand what was still to be withheld from them, they became dissatisfied with the officer whom they had thus suddenly raised into power. He had curbed for them the insolence of the rich, but he was also called upon to repress the license of the poor.

No party would be satisfied with the changes which he had introduced ; the higher arts had lost too much, and the inferior orders had gained too little. The latter pretended that the Gonfalonier, who had been raised to the head of the state by them, and for their benefit, had deserted their interests. They appointed, therefore, a new Signory of eight captains with other officers ; and proceeded, after having formally deposed the Gonfalonier and the officers who adhered to him, to declare a new constitution.

The *arts*, of both orders, and Michael Lando himself, perhaps desired nothing more than a manifestation of so refractory a spirit on the part of the mob. When a deputation from their new administration waited on the council over which Lando presided, its members were surprised at being received with all the dignity of office by one whose origin and condition had promised so differently ; but they remembered that he was surrounded by all this circumstance of pride only through that agency by which they themselves were now constituted an official body to decide on the fate of the city. They addressed the council, therefore, with threats of instant degradation ; and while that body remained for a moment irresolute, and by this irresolution was about to confirm the rebellion, the Gonfalonier rushed upon the foremost and boldest of the delegation, and, having wounded him by a blow of his sword, gave him over as a culprit to be dealt with by the officers of the law.

The report of this transaction being carried to the people, in a moment the whole city was in commotion. It was, however, no longer the people against the aristocracy, it was the people divided against themselves ;

and the conduct of Lando soon decided the contest in favour of that side in which all the *arts* were arrayed against the multitude who exercised no profession to give them a rank or a name. The victory thus obtained decided the fate of the conquered, and shut them out from that participation in the government which they had so recently gained. Two members of the *Signoria*, who had been chosen from their class, were now expelled from their places ; and all the honours of the government were divided between the orders of arts or trades, with this only provision in favour of the inferior denominations,—that of the nine members of the *Signoria*, five should be selected from their division. Thus, while the lowest populace was, as such, expelled from the councils and from the administration, the differences between the *superior* and *inferior* arts received a full and constitutional confirmation. The artisans of the former class were now called the people ; and those of the latter were content, in consideration of the advantages attached to that name, to be denominated plebeians. At the head of this division, and, consequently, of the republic, were Benedetto Alberti, Giorgio Scali, and Salvestro de' Medici.

From the first commencement of her internal dissensions Florence had been harsh in the treatment of those whose fortune it was to succumb. Often before she had driven her sons into exile, and to the necessity of imploring foreign aid to restore them to their country. On this occasion the virtues of charity and forgiveness formed no part of her political morality. Vast numbers had been actually banished, or compelled, by the rigour of their treatment at home, to choose self-banishment. Many others remained to avail themselves of the first favourable occasion for the vindication of their rights and the accomplishment of a cherished revenge. An opportunity at last, after three years of suffering, appeared to present itself. Charles of Durazzo was in arms for the recovery of the kingdom of

Naples against the celebrated Joanna, in whose history were anticipated the romantic events which give so much interest to the story of the Scottish Mary. A correspondence was opened with him for the restoration of the banished Florentines, and for the delivery of the city into his hands. In the very execution, this plan was discovered; and the conspirators, among whom were many of the most illustrious of those who had formerly constituted the monitory commission, were abandoned to the just judgment of the law. From this moment the peace of the city was destroyed. The terror of new treasons begot unnecessary severity on the part of the government. While the fears and jealousies of the administration were communicating themselves to the populace at large, the imprudence of one of the heads of the administration gave the signal for the overthrow of that establishment which had been created by the wisdom and moderation of Lando.

Salvestro de' Medici was a man who, in the ordinary exigencies of the city, was not likely to make himself conspicuous. Without an over-scrupulousness for the particulars of his country's policy, he was satisfied to see those republican principles in the ascendancy which seemed necessary for the general good of the community. In his address to the people he had declared that cases of individual crime or depravity affected him not; conceiving that the part of a political leader should be to prepare and secure to the people a wise constitution, and that the violation of an incidental law became fit matter of cognizance only to the special tribunals. He was an honest politician, and perhaps a zealous republican; but he made no pretensions to the character of a moralist. Of the two who divided with him the direction of the people, Benedetto Alberti enjoyed, perhaps, the greatest influence. He was less shrewd and more uncompromising than Salvestro de' Medici in his political conduct, but with a regard

for private morals which sometimes made it dangerous to confide to him a great political interest. He had joined the party of the *lesser arts* at first, not more from the love which he bore to the republic and to republican principles, than from abhorrence of the enormities, which, under the guise of state expediency, the commission and its supporters practised upon the citizens, and the oppression with which they perverted the laws to the destruction of their adversaries. With a character of this kind, it was necessary that he should find himself either removed from the administration of affairs, or connected with individuals whose moral sense might be equal to his own. Unfortunately the third in the control of the city concerns was of a temper altogether unfitted to be associated with Alberti and Salvestro de' Medici. Giorgio Scali had been a demagogue of the most ordinary description; and having, by the common arts of men of his condition, attained an eminence in the state, he used for the purposes of private interest or private feeling the power with which he had been entrusted for the public weal. His insolence and disregard of the laws, at last, however, excited the public disgust sufficiently to encourage, amongst the enemies of the popular interests, new hopes and a renovated ambition. The instrument with which they were to work was ready to their hands; for Alberti, enraged at the violations of justice and decency which were perpetrated daily by the retainers of Scali, had arrayed himself in open opposition to his colleague, dividing thereby that authority, whose concentrated energies were required to sustain the attacks which the higher orders or new aristocracy were maturing against it.

After a long impunity, Scali had seemed to forget that his influence, which was but the offspring of popular favour, depended upon the voice of an intelligent people for its support and continuance. Each day some new offence estranged their affections; and when,

at last, he had committed a misdemeanour which rendered him liable to the severest inflictions of the law, he was confounded to see himself, deserted by all, in the hands of his enemies. Armed with the majesty of the outraged laws, these enemies now might punish a thousand private griefs in the name of public justice, and aim a fatal blow at the plebeian power in the person of one of its officers. As his execution was about to take place, the chiefs of the opposite party raised the cry of "the Guelphs," in which they were joined by many of the populace, weary of the tyranny of their own magistracy, and confounding with the infidelity of the officer the power which had created his office. Alberti himself, as an advocate for justice and the equal administration of the laws, was compelled to take part in the condemnation of his colleague and the consequent downfall of his party. "You have consented," said his unfortunate companion, "you have consented that this shame and this wrong should fall upon my head which should never with my will have fallen upon yours; but this I will leave for a warning to you, Benedetto Alberti,—that this, which is the last of sufferings to me, is but the beginning of sorrows to you." This bitter prophecy of Seali was too soon to be realised. His death was indeed the beginning of sorrows to Alberti, who could not but lament having taken part in that measure which was to reproduce an aristocracy in his country. For a year disorder prevailed in the city. *Balia* was formed upon *Balia*, with power, as the word imports, to reorganise the state. No organisation, however, could be formed; but all that was done, though little towards the establishment of order, went to rob the people of their rights which the rising of the *Ciompi** had won. The lower orders, which had been permitted to constitute

* The *Ciompi* were the carders of wool, and constituted the lowest recognised order of artisans in Florence.

themselves into two new *arts*, were deprived of their privileges; even those which had existed before, and which had now, since the year 1378, exercised a preponderating power, were reduced to an inferior state, and deprived of the valued right of eligibility to the high office of Gonfalonier, or to the other offices nearest in dignity to that. "The nobles, the rich merchants, and the higher citizens, comprehended in the *major arts*, took possession of the public places; created a *balia* or supreme commission to reform the state; abolished all the laws which had arisen from the revolution or the tumult of the Ciompi; exiled Michael Lando, Benedetto Alberti, and all those who had in any way signalised themselves in the insurrection; and, finally, reconstituted the aristocracy of the nobili popolani more firmly than it had ever yet stood."*

These important events may be considered as the first commencement of that series of losses to the Florentine democracy which terminated in the well-disguised but treacherous tyranny of the Medicean usurpation. The democratic principle, which had been exerting and extending its influence in Florence from the death of the countess Matilda till it reached its full developement in the year 1378, now began to decline, after only four years of undisputed and unqualified ascendancy: the torch-light of freedom was to be extinguished in Florence; but not till it had kindled a fire, in the glory of which the first feeble glimmer of its rays has been lost to the nations and people to whose darkness it shone, and who have been illumined by the light which it shed.

In the midst of her domestic disturbances the city was called upon to resist the encroachments of the northern states, which, having surrendered their liberties to the powerful and unprincipled family of the Visconti, were forced by their tyrants into a war of subju-

* Sismondi.

gation with the cities of central Italy. Gian Galeazzo, surnamed the count of Virtu, the member of this family who now enjoyed the sovereign power in Lombardy, was far before all his predecessors in the arts of intrigue and corruption. The states of Tuscany, on which he had cast his views with a greedy solicitude, had little fear of him while the governance of their councils was in the hands of the people; but just as the aristocracy had recovered in Florence that ascendancy which the revolution of the Ciompi had wrested from them, the free cities of Italy were struck aghast at the sudden surrender of Pisa to the count di Virtu. Lucca, Sienna, Perugia, Genoa, Pistoia, and Bologna followed; compelled to the necessity of seeking his protection, or to the still harsher fate of submitting to his arms. Each acquired possession added new hopes and new power to his ambition; a fresh eruption of the plague prostrated the little energy that remained to oppose his now impending tyranny; and Florence, on whom the last hope of Italy was placed, stood appalled at the rapidity and the certainty of his conquests.

But though now trembling herself, and on the verge of destruction, she still felt that she had sustained the weight of an overwhelming war for the preservation of Italian liberty; she still assembled her forces around the republican standard, and while she resisted she was preserved. The pestilence, which had seemed to threaten the desolation of the states that yet held out against the northern arms, had entered the dominions of Visconti. He had shut himself up in his castle to avoid the contagious intercourse of men; but in his secret retreat he was overtaken by its poison, and just as he had seemed to unfurl his banner over the prostrated liberties of his country, tidings of his death were sent forth as a signal for exultation and joy, and excited the cry of rejoicing amid the desolations of disease and the ravages of death. For twelve years the

ambition of Gian Galeazzo had kept the Tuscan states in arms, when, in 1402, his death gave peace to her wearied citizens.

During the long contest which was thus brought to a close, the Florentines had been fortunate in procuring the assistance of an English adventurer, who had formerly been in the service of Pisa. His exploits were considered wonderful in his age, and his name is deserving of mention in the history of that people to which he certainly rendered important services; but we have not thought it necessary to particularise the battles in which the soldiers of Florence were engaged for the defence of their country; there is little, except for the tactician, in the narration of military manœuvres, of the posting of armies, and the disposition of the field. The name of Sir John Hawkwood has, therefore, made little figure in our pages; but there are often high political and moral consequences in the result of a battle, and it is proper that the glory or shame which attach to them should be placed to the account of those by whom they have been produced.

The history of Italy is emphatically a history of wars; of the conflict of bad passions and the struggle of ambition with the unquenchable spirit of liberty. To no era does this observation apply with more remarkable aptness than to the one with which we are at this moment engaged. In the midst, however, of the tumult of excited desires, hopes, and fears, the minds of men are easily diverted from one enthusiasm to another, and the ardour of political or military excitement is sometimes nearly allied to that of religious frenzy. Sigonius designates the year 1260 as the *year of devotion*; and the year 1335 renewed its full fanaticism. Struck with sudden contrition perhaps, or perhaps not finding in the ordinary vents of battle and bloodshed, now become common, a sufficient allayment of the high-wrought agitation of their minds, whole populations were known to throw aside

their arms, and, careless of all consequences, to abandon their homes with the scourge in their hands and the marks of its infliction in their flesh, to go from city to city exhorting to peace, and rending the air with songs of penitence or praise. Their pious purpose, however, and the holy enthusiasm by which they were actuated, did not always succeed in securing them a reception in those cities to which they directed their pilgrimage. The tyrant of Milan had thrown off the mask too long to fancy a necessity of feigning respect to the zeal of the pilgrims; but we may be permitted to wonder that the gates of Rome should be closed against those who came, in the spirit of religious zeal, to offer on the altar of religion their hearts and their passions. The fervour of this enthusiasm continued during all the political troubles which intestine dissensions or foreign wars occasioned to the Italian states. In the year 1399 it seemed to have reached its acme. According to the sum of its population, every town sent forth a procession of five, ten, or twenty thousand persons of both sexes to wander from city to city, and bear the useless cry of "*Peace and Mercy*" among a people with whom piety was not incompatible with all the crimes of envy, hate, and ambition. Three thousand Lucchese, four thousand Pistoians, and forty thousand Florentines, enveloped in white mantles, from which they derived the name of the *White Companies*, departed simultaneously from their homes to engage in the missionary labours of peace and love. Many orators among them attracted temporarily the hearts of their hearers, and gave, or thought to give, peace to their country. The following extract illustrates as well the character of the times to which we refer, as that of the principal leaders in these religious companies, of whom, though flourishing nearly a century earlier, Giovanni di Vicenza may be considered the fair representative and prototype. "The singular history of an individual far

less elevated in his station than popes or emperors, Fra Giovanni di Vicenza, belongs to these times and to this subject. This Dominican friar began his career at Bologna in 1233, preaching the cessation of war and forgiveness of injuries. He repaired from thence to Padua, to Verona, and the neighbouring cities. At his command men laid down their instruments of war, and embraced their enemies. With that susceptibility of transient impulse natural to popular governments, several republics implored him to reform their laws and to settle their differences. A general meeting was summoned in the plain of Paquara, upon the banks of the Adige. The Lombards poured themselves forth from Romagna and the cities of the March; Guelfs and Ghibelins, nobles and burghers, free citizens and tenantry of feudal lords, marshalled around their ear-roeios, caught from the lips of the preacher the illusive promise of universal peace. They submitted to agreements dictated by Fra Giovanni, which contain little else than a mutual amnesty; whether it were that their quarrels had been really without object, or that he had dexterously avoided to determine the real points of contention. But power and reputation suddenly acquired are transitory. Not satisfied with being the legislator and arbiter of Italian cities, he aimed at becoming their master; and abused the enthusiasm of Vicenza and Verona, to obtain a grant of absolute sovereignty. Changed from an apostle to an usurper, the fate of Fra Giovanni might be predicted; and he speedily gave place to those, who, though they made a worse use of their power, had, in the eyes of mankind more natural pretensions to possess it." But the excitement of any passion, though the most laudable of which our natures may be susceptible, could scarcely be supposed to fit the minds of its votaries for a permanent tranquillity. As the enthusiasm of piety had superseded political heat or military ardour, other passions, or these momentarily discarded affections,

again were required for the restless spirits which misguided zeal had not attempted to calm. When the novelty of this new dissipation had worn itself away, the people returned with new energy to their interrupted animosities, to factions and blood.

It might have been expected that the danger which threatened Florence from without would have quieted at least the opposition of parties within her walls; or that this cause being insufficient, the spirit of religion, so eminently in action, should have reconciled for a moment the jarring interests of party. Lando and Alberti had been banished; the latter had borne with him in exile the humble and the honest heart, which had rendered him too virtuous or too weak for the times; and crowning a life of virtue with the devotion of a martyr, he died at Rhodes on his return from a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre. The death of this blameless patriot was not sufficient to disarm the malice of the enemies of his house. All power had now passed into their hands, to oppress without accountability, or to build an unresisted tyranny. Unfortunately, the people, in a moment of discontent with their own leaders, had abandoned themselves to the watchful cunning of an enemy, whose enmity, founded on an incompatibility of interests and principles, was not to be soothed by submission, or appeased by less than the annihilation of its suspected object.

With this revival of the aristocracy the old family of the Albizzi again became conspicuous in the government. The feuds and ambition of this race had caused the tumults which resulted in the rising of the burghers and the revolution of the Ciompi; but no lesson gives permanent instruction to an aristocracy. A new rising had now, however, fewer terrors for the dominant party; but although it might have perceived that a current had set against popular rule, which would forever destroy the democracy, it did not perceive that it was still in the power of the lowest

populace to bury the pride and independence of their oppressors in the ruins of their own, by giving to an individual, perhaps to be chosen from their own order, the sole sovereignty of the city. If the popular nobles had been satisfied with the power and influence regained on the execution of Scali, the rule of the Medici might have been averted in Florence. Already this family had risen to eminence, and the people, in the new exactions of Albizzi and his party, remembered that Salvestro de' Medici had been the advocate and champion of their rights in their former successful revolt. They now directed their eyes towards his successor as to an hereditary protector.

All the historians of that era appear to agree that if Veri de' Medici, now the representative head of his family, had had a small portion of the ambition which afterwards gave to his name its bad pre-eminence, the factions of Florence would have ceased under the correction of an absolute master; but the virtues which they praise in him seem to be scarcely of a higher order than the moderation of imbecility. Nevertheless he appears to have shown a momentary spirit of noble patriotism when replying to the suspicious counsel of a former enemy, who now sought his friendship, and urged him to snatch that power which the infatuated people were willing to offer to any one who should rid them of the odious oppression of the aristocracy. "We were enemies once, but your enmity harmed me not; so neither shall the pernicious counsels of your worthless friendship." We cannot, it is true, deny, upon this evidence, the moderation which his contemporaries praised in this conduct; but if there were little ambition to censure, there was also little patriotism to admire. A whole and suffering people addressed themselves to his sympathy, and called on him to exercise in their behalf that influence with which they had invested his name. The prayer of his fellow-citizens excited, however, no touch of feeling in his breast; he

refused to stir in their cause, and because he had not the energy of a tyrant or an usurper, he has been elevated to the place of an hero. Veri de' Medici, the ruler for a moment of the people's hearts, became an instrument in the hands of the aristocracy, and the last hope of his country's liberty was deluded by his imbecility or treachery. Upon his word the citizens laid down their arms and returned to their homes.

The *Signori* or chiefs of the government, finding thus the city at their disposal, began the formal work of demolition to the democracy. They first disarmed the people, and then denounced and sent into exile their leaders and advocates. The patriotism which, from its almost too great purity and singleness, had caused the ruin of Benedetto Alberti with the fall of his party, appears, in some degree, to have animated all who bore his name. Many, either from the impulse of this virtue, or driven to it by the persecutions of the Albizzi, yet resolved upon another attempt for the restoration of the popular government; but the spirit was extinct. All those who had taken part in this last conspiracy of the friends of the people were abandoned by the people themselves, and not a voice was raised for their defence when the sentence of their bold attempt was passed on them by the now re-established aristocracy. The power of *admonition*, restored to the dominant party, was used without fear and without mercy; the Alberti, the Medici, the Scali, and the Ricci, ancient rivals of the Albizzi, were banished or incapacitated by *admonition* for ten years for holding any office in the state. Against the Alberti, however, the greatest rigour was resorted to; every member of that extensive and illustrious family, being either banished or imprisoned, who had passed his fifteenth year. With this catastrophe of the supporters of the democracy we may bid farewell to the last gleams of civil liberty and equality in Florence. The bright examples of her republican virtues are almost from this moment extinct;

and all the crimes of ambition, all the weakness of fear, all the enormities, in short, of tyranny, the horrors of which the petty states of subjugated Romagna and Lombardy had held out as a beacon to Tuscany, were from this moment preparing for Florence, and soon, under a usurped authority, to stain the pages of her history.

When first the states of Tuscany threw off the yoke of imperial bondage, if Florence could not be considered among the inferior cities, she certainly could boast no superiority over very many which seemed to possess advantages in situation equal to her own. Pisa, upon the coast, and Lucca, long the capital of Tuscany, might seem at least to have started with advantage in the race of improvement; while Sienna, Pistoia, and Arezzo, had no reason to consider themselves last in the contest. In the period that had elapsed, however, from the death of the countess Matilda to that of Gian Galeazzo the tyrant of Lombardy, these cities had all developed the principles of their policy; they had all pursued them to the final result; and the greater portion had sunk into dependence as the consequence of the institutions under which they had run their short career.

The long contest between Pisa and Florence for supremacy was at an end, but a new one had arisen, in which the latter city was to contend for its existence. If the commercial interests of the Florentines rendered the possession of the Porto Pisano necessary to that people, the jealous fears of Genoa, their only rival upon the same side of Italy, were equally excited at the idea of the corresponding maritime preponderance which such an accession would give to her already formidable rival. It would be sufficient that Pisa should remain independent to suit the views of the Genoese, for her rivalry was at an end; but as it was manifest that she could not long resist the encroachments of the Florentines by her own strength, a momentary hope

arose in the Genoese of establishing themselves in this capital port of Tuscany. The government of Genoa was at this time in the hands of an individual, however, whose passion was more ignoble, and at the same time stronger, than ambition. Pretending that the alliance of the 'Tuscans was necessary to the Genoese against the ambition of Venice, which, with its republican institutions, was absorbing the petty states of the tyrants of Lombardy, he agreed to abandon Pisa to the Florentines for a stipulated sum, which the merchants of Florence alone, without the interference of the government, might well have afforded to pay for the commercial advantages secured to them by the occupation of the Porto Pisano.

The purchase-money, however, was paid for little more than the privilege of conquering Pisa without interference from the Genoese. The citadel, it is true, had been delivered up to the Florentines by Gabriello, the son of Gian Galeazzo, who, from the death of his father, had occupied the city of Pisa as his inheritance ; but who was, in reality, a miserable instrument of Buccicaldo, the tyrant of Genoa. But though reduced to abandon the contest with Florence for supremacy in Tuscany, Pisa had not abandoned the hope of maintaining her independence. To Florence, least of all, would she willingly resign it ; and the contest between these ancient rivals was not likely to be less bitter because the tide of circumstance had given to the one party an air of superiority and the confidence of a conqueror.

The citadel was soon retaken, and the Florentines were made to understand that Pisa was to be won by other metal than by gold to make her subjugation permanent. A small fleet was fitted out, therefore, to begin in earnest the war of conquest ; nor did it now require a large one to effect the blockade of that city which had formerly been able to send out her two hundred gallies, and which had contended successfully for

a long time with Genoa and Venice for the dominion of the sea. All the avenues, meanwhile, were closed by which the Pisans might receive aid on the land-side, in order that the destinies of the two cities might be decided by the strength of their own arms. The Pisans paused for a moment to capitulate; they asked for a hearing for their ambassadors, who, as the ministers of a sovereign state, were entitled to speak. But the Florentines now felt themselves above the necessity of disguise; they refused to hear the ambassadors, and addressed themselves at once to the Pisan magistracy, directing in such a manner "*to the ancients of our city of Pisa*," as that they might appear to be engaged in the suppression of a revolted city rather than in the ambitious persecution of a weak but independent state. On the part of the Pisans the defence of the city was intrusted to a single leader; but the Florentines, always jealous of the power of their citizens, and apprehensive of its abuse by individuals, established a council of ten for the prosecution of the war. In this council Maso degli Albizzi, the head of the aristocracy, and Gino Capponi, assumed the principal authority; but the latter only became distinguished in this undertaking.

The tyranny of the Visconti had ceased for a time with the death of Gian Galeazzo; and the death or subjugation of the greater number of his children restored a temporary liberty to many of the cities which had groaned under the oppression of his family. A new race of masters, however, was preparing for them, and its father was now training himself in the person of a young man named Attendoli, but better known by the title of Sforza, which his character and his achievements won for him, and by which his family became known as the successors of the Visconti in Milan. This remarkable youth first distinguished himself in the wars of Florence and Pisa, in which he held a command on the side of the former.

In order to intercept the aid which the Pisans might expect to receive from the neighbouring cities in league with them, the Florentines had erected on either side of the Arno a tower, to be connected by a bridge of communication. A sudden rise in the waters of this river suggested to the besieged the idea of destroying without danger this bridge, and of thus obtaining possession of one of the towers. In pursuance of this plan, they cast huge beams into the stream, which, being driven with impetuosity against the bridge by the violence of its swelling waters, soon detached it from its abutments, and separated the towers placed at either end. The first thought of the Florentines, who feared that the Pisans would fortify themselves in that one which was thus cut off from the support of the main army, was to demolish it by firing on it themselves. Young Attendoli opposed this design, and springing into a small boat with two of his soldiers, he declared that he himself would defend the tower against the whole army of the Pisans. At the same time in the Florentine army was another soldier of fortune, named Tartaglia, the rival of Attendoli. Resolving not to be outdone by the boldness of his competitor, Tartaglia seized another battcau that lay upon the shore, and pushed into the headlong stream to share the glory of a death that seemed inevitable. Arrived upon the opposite shore, they marched boldly against the army of the Pisans, which had sallied out to possess itself of the tower thus left almost defenceless. At the same moment the Florentine army on the other side, with a universal shout directed its march upon Pisa. The boldness of the advance of the two captains well-known to the besieged, and the simultaneous movement of the Florentine camp, produced immediately in the minds of the Pisans the idea of an ambush and a concerted plan of attack. They instantly drew off towards the city, which they believed to be on the point of suffering an attack ; and the fruits of their artifice, by which the tower had

been for a moment placed within their reach, were torn from their grasp. This advantage lost to them, the war was carried on continually with fresh disadvantage on their side, when at last the scarcity of food began to threaten them with the accumulated horrors of famine.

The first suggestion of necessity in this case to the Pisan commander, Gambacorti, was to reduce the number of the starving inhabitants, by sending from the city the aged, the females, and the young, or all, in short, who were unable to bear a part in its defence. Having resolved, however, upon the conquest of Pisa, the Florentines were not to be moved from their purpose by the cry of human suffering: the hungry wives and children of the Pisan soldiers were allies stronger than all the mercenaries in their army, and the hope and pride of victory had silenced the pleadings of nature and humanity. This determination of the Pisan leader was met by a proclamation from the general of the Florentines, denouncing the penalty of an ignominious death against every man, and of an exposure to shame against every woman, of Pisa, who should be found without its walls. For a moment the authorities were disposed to look upon this denunciation as a threat intended to terrify, rather than as the expression of the settled purpose of their enemies; and a few of the aged citizens, with three or four females, were permitted to fall into the hands of the Florentines. A gibbet was instantly prepared before the walls, and the horror-stricken inhabitants were summoned to witness the execution of the barbarous sentence pronounced against their fellows, and to receive full conviction, in their death, of the exterminating enmity which nothing but their submission could appease. Many an Italian city had given the example, when pressed by an enemy, of calling in the aid of a third power, to which, as a return for protection, the government of the people was to be submitted. In her present emergency Pisa would gladly have received upon such terms a

protector ; but that state, whose interest should most nearly have united her with Pisa, had betrayed her to her enemy, and the army of the Florentines was now led by Luca del Fiesco, a Genoese.

The duke of Burgundy was finally selected by the desperate citizens as a last hope against the impending victory of the Florentines ; but the treatment of his herald might have instructed the Pisans in the settled resolution of their ancient rivals, while it should have determined them to the last resistance or to a ready submission. All the strength of the prince, who had been accepted as the liberator of a despairing people, was limited to the use of remonstrance and denunciation ; and Florence, who had now thought to commence the career of a conquering nation, required the strong hand of compulsion to drive her from her premeditated course. She smiled at the idle attempt of the duke of Burgundy to interfere in the prosecution of her plans ; and when his messenger presented himself in behalf of the Pisans, refusing to recognize his character of minister, her generals declared that he had incurred the penalty denounced against every Pisan who should be taken in the attempt to escape from the famishing city, and ordered him to be thrown into the stream of the Arno. Accident, or the connivance of the Florentine officers, saved the life of the victim, who made his escape to Florence, and there, before the authorities, entered his formal complaint against the violated faith and the barbarity of her soldiery. The magistrates of the republic listened with formal dignity to his expostulations ; but while he expostulated, the destiny of the devoted citizens was being accomplished. The scarcity of food had at last become an absolute destitution in Pisa ; the famished and emaciated citizen dragged himself along the deserted streets, and fed the raging cravings of a worn-out nature on the scanty grass or weeds that grew up by the side of the dismantled palaces. It was

now obviously a cruelty, without the possibility of avail, to hold out against the pressing assault of the Florentine forces. Privation and sickness had thinned the number of those who should have defended the walls, and those who remained were in the hands of death. With a heavy heart, but with a humanity which reflects credit on his memory, Gambacorti declared that the city was ready to capitulate. There were many conditions introduced to render this submission of an old and haughty enemy as little mortifying as possible, but the absolute sovereignty of the city was to be transferred to the Signory and people of Florence. In that city the news was received with the liveliest demonstrations of joy. The unanimous ratification of the treaty by the authorities declared their satisfaction; and on the 9th of October, 1406, after a contest of ten months, the Florentine army took possession of Pisa. Gino Capponi, one of the committee, who had had a principal hand in the conduct of the war, and who had likewise conducted the treaty for the surrender, was preferred to the merited honour of receiving the submission and allegiance of the conquered city, and to his resolution and firmness on this occasion the Pisans and the Florentines were equally indebted; the former, for the respect which he caused to be paid to their persons and their property; the latter, for the preservation of their fame, by the order and moderation of their soldiers in the moment of victory. This distinguished leader and citizen is himself the principal authority for the events which relate to this interesting contest; and his narration, with characteristic simplicity, relates the manner in which his arduous task was performed. "We entered," says he, "as though we had been holding in Florence a review; and, indeed, if it had been an army of so many holy friars, they would have created more confusion and scandal." To secure the good will of the Pisans, who, it was apprehended, might be averse to this surrender of their independence, the Florentines distributed, in

their march through the city, a profusion of bread, which was seized by the starving population and devoured with the greatest avidity. Upon a strict examination of the city, it was found that nothing remained which could be in any manner converted into food within the walls, except two emaciated cows and two pounds of sugar. A people suddenly relieved from such a state of suffering could receive, in no other light than in that of benefactors the host who, with generous hand, provided and scattered among them the blessings of plenty; who redeemed their starving families from death, and quieted the cries of their perishing children. The whole policy of the conquerors was, indeed, of such a conciliatory character, as very soon not only to reconcile the Pisans to their government, but even to bring to their allegiance all the former dependencies of Pisa, comprising, according to the account of one of her historians, eighty-four towns enclosed with walls. Thus terminated the rivalry of two cities, which at the outset of their career had seemed to be natural rivals, and which had been, as it were, the representatives for the same period of conflicting principles. The first gleam of liberty had appeared in Florence, and the last hope of imperial despotism had been cherished in Pisa; the triumph of Florence, though little of patriotism or of republican spirit mingled in the joy of her conquest or in the conduct of her war, was yet the triumph of principle and a vindication of the early policy of her citizens.

Pignotti, the historian of Tuscany, observes that nothing could have been more advantageous to a commercial city like Florence than the possessions thus gained by the reduction of Pisa. The passage of goods, which had been formerly dependent upon her rivals, was now free to Florence; and the advantages of this freedom were immediately manifested in the increase of her commerce. "Yet," continues the same author, "the Republic never became a maritime power.

Though from this period she seems to have directed her care to the increase of her naval strength, the number of her vessels still continued small, and their bulk was little more than that of lighters and cutters, to relieve or to pilot the heavier vessels which from other countries arrived at her ports." An admiral, nevertheless, or, as he was entitled, a general of the galleys, was created; one condition of his appointment being a residence in Pisa. Andrea Gargioli was the first upon whom that honourable office was conferred.

CHAPTER V.

Schism in the Church.—Ladislaus makes war upon the Florentines.—Council of Pisa, and Deposition of the Anti-popes.—Cardinal Coscia aspires to the Papacy.—Created Pope.—Views of the King of Naples upon the States of the Church.—Deceives the Pope, and Invades his Dominions.—Death of Ladislaus.—Council of Constance.—Election of Martin, and Termination of the Schism.—Affairs of Lombardy.

As Florence began to descend from her high condition of freedom, she began also to direct that attention which had formerly been engrossed by her domestic affairs to the position and concern of other governments. Important revolutions were preparing in Italy, the effect of which was to be most felt beyond her limits; and in the production of which the most important agents were also indifferent or hostile to her interests. Long before, the destiny of this unhappy region had been fixed; and if the spirit of her people for a time retarded its accomplishment, the vast increase of power to the great transalpine nations, the new direction of commerce by which the sources of Italian industry and affluence were exhausted, the growing liberties of other people, all contributed to hasten the catastrophe which for so long a period,

though arrested, had been impending over the devoted peninsula. The quarrels of kings had given to the see of Rome an exorbitant power. Religion had brought contending princes to the father of their church, and the paternal decision of their bishop had been binding upon their conscience and honour. The umpire state, thus granted by piety, had ripened into a prescriptive claim; and he who was so frequently called upon in cases of disputed right to judge with equity, was taught at last to look upon his judgment as a favour, and to consider his mere decision of right as constituting right itself. With the settled distribution of power among the rulers of nations, and with the adjustment of territorial jurisdiction, the temporal authority of the papacy declined among the courts of kings; and when the holy chair became itself an object of dispute, when the sacred office came now in its turn to follow the decision of temporal princes, the whole fabric of its power was dissolved, and the world was amazed to discover the phantom which it had mistaken for strength. Three, and even four, candidates for the chair of St. Peter, at the period which we have now reached in our history, disputed its honours, and found their individual partizans both within and without the limits of Italy.

In the midst of the dissensions of the hierarchy, the king of Naples began to unfold the ambitious project, greatly encouraged by these differences, of extending the rule, which the crown of Sicily had exercised so long by the policy of its princes, in central Italy and in the destiny of the peninsula. That crown had now come into possession of a dangerous enemy to the independence of the Tuscan states. But, though fallen in their high estimate of civil liberty, the Florentines were as resolute as they had ever been against the usurpations of a foreign power. They had, indeed, in exchanging the dignity of simple and proud republicanism, been in no trifling measure deceived by the

hope of extended foreign influence ; the weight of authority in the deliberation of nations was placed by them against that which they had lost or were about to lose in their municipal councils ; and the splendour of extended rule was made the compensation for the curtailment of domestic and civil immunities. When Ladislaus entered Tuscany, therefore, he had no less to overcome in the stubborn independence of the people whom he had come to subdue, than the former aspirants to the control of her states ; but he had a new difficulty in their union, which his predecessors had never found, and which, had it existed when the disputes of the Church and the Empire first distracted the Italians, and diverted them from the pursuit of political happiness in political knowledge, might have closed the passes of its mighty Alps against the hordes by which the usurpations of the latter were effected, and kept within his simple diocess the aspirations of the Roman bishop. In this union the independent states now found their strength.

Ladislaus had chosen the party of the anti-pope, who, by the name of Gregory XII. contested the honours and privileges of his high office with a competitor who seems to have had little better claim to them. The Florentines, however, availed themselves of the name of his adversary to strengthen their resistance to the covert attack upon their independence. After a long and expensive conflict, the peace which they were enabled to make with Ladislaus relieved them at once from all apprehension of his ambition, and must have declared to that prince that the moment had not yet arrived for the enslavement of Italy. It was not, indeed, the ambition of Ladislaus alone that drew the republic of Florence into this expensive war. The ambition equally of her own magistracy had not reluctantly engaged in the contest ; but the expenses of its conduct, which had seemed light while the fate of the city might be considered as in doubt, assumed, when

the Florentines were to cast up the account between their gains and their expenditures, a very different aspect. It is true that the purchase of Cortona, which had been sold to them by the treaty for 60,000 florins, might not appear an injudicious investment of the public funds; but the condition of Cortona was such as to render it extremely probable that Ladislaus would have gladly transferred the possession at any time to the Florentines for such a sum without the compulsion of a war, in which, if he were indeed a loser, he certainly had not been conquered. These were considerations that did not occur to the people while engaged in the war that carried their name and the fame of their valour to the distant courts of Europe; but when that war was at an end, and when they saw, perhaps, that individual aggrandizement was much more likely to follow as a result of their victories than national glory, they still gave evidence that all the ancient character and spirit of the republic were not extinct; that they had not yet become the property or instruments of their magistrates; and that the government was still in some degree the people's government. To have a check upon this tendency to war, they demanded, therefore, the establishment of a council, to consist of two hundred, whose approbation of the proceedings of the *Signoria* should be necessary to entitle them to the consideration of the council of the *hundred and thirty-one* and that of the *commune*. In this manner it was hoped that no declaration of hostility could be made at the mere instigation of personal ambition. Whether the effect of this regulation tended to produce so instantaneously the end proposed in its introduction, or whether the situation of the peninsula did not admit of her interference, Florence was for some time free from any important foreign war; and, what may appear even more a matter of congratulation or astonishment, from any exercise of that turbulent spirit which had formerly characterised the exercise of her independ-

ence. Each page, however, of her history will now remove the reader farther from the republican glories of her early rule, and he may possibly be little inclined to approve the change of even a boisterous liberty for a listless submission. An unimportant war with the Genoese alone disturbed the perfect peace of the Republic. Meanwhile, the ambition of assuming among the larger states the rank and condition of an umpire, still made her mingle in the disputes of Rome, from which, in the first eras of her liberty, she had suffered and endured so much.

The disputed claims of the various individuals on whom the names of pope and anti-pope were differently bestowed by their respective sustainers and adversaries, had been submitted to a council, which was convened in Pisa for the adjustment of the litigated question, and for the removal of the scandal which was relaxing day by day the hold of the church upon the opinions and the consciences of men. Very little had been accomplished by this council. To the former claimants, Benedict and Gregory, was added a third by its decision, while the yet unsatisfied ambition of a fourth was preparing farther dissensions that might render necessary another and more authoritative convention of the cardinals. Alexander V. had been chosen, at the council of Pisa, for his unfitness to control the affairs of the church in its unsettled condition. The views of the aspiring cardinal Coscia required such an instrument; and the forbearance of his grasping ambition, which could temporarily reject the long-desired keys, might seem to indicate a policy and a firmness of purpose destined to succeed. On the death of Alexander, accordingly, when the crafty churchman believed that the reins of permanent power were about to be placed in his grasp, he no longer refused to receive the dignity now a second time proffered.

The long and habitual respect with which the

Christian world had now been accustomed for ages to regard the papal throne and office ; the art with which the great seat of its empire had been made to assume, in the eyes of the pious and devout, a title to reverence, hardly less profound and nothing less sincere than that with which the humblest pilgrim knelt at the imagined sepulchre of his crucified Lord, or trod the scene of his long sufferings and death ; the use, perhaps, still more than all, to which the quarrels of Rome might be turned by the various aspirants to power and influence in Italy, had caused that the wildest ambition of national pride or individual presumption had never dared to meditate the invasion of her dominions, sacred as the patrimony of the high and tutelar saint of the Christian church. Gian Galeazzo Visconti had never contemplated the violation of their sanctity, and the kings of Naples had been willing, in the midst of their splendour of conquest, to appear as the champions of their inviolability in the field. When, however, the high and sacred dignity of the papal crown became, like that of the mere symbols of temporal authority, the object and the openly acknowledged prize of human ambition, the spell of its power was broken, and the strength of its arms reduced to the common dependence of numbers, of military courage and skill, was found to be insufficient to contend with that which the tyrants of many Italian cities were ready to array against it. Made up of people and states, whose sectional and national jealousies left them no feeling in common, when the great schism distracted her bosom, the Church was found destitute of concentrated strength ; and the fragments of a party in every city stood ready to raise for reciprocal offence the arms which one government had not been able to reduce to one feeling and one will. At the head of a thus divided state the successor of Alexander was placed, when the destinies of the Church exalted him to the guidance of her government¹

The distinguishing trait in the character of this prelate was an almost unequalled cunning. But the individual whom his recent elevation had made his enemy, was no less eminent in the exercise of the same attribute. Ladislaus had fixed his desires upon the acquisition of the papal towns, and upon their annexation to the throne of Naples. He had already tried the power of his arms against the Florentines, who had formed the great obstacle to his occupation of the coveted places. The result of that trial had determined him to the use of other means. After having sustained the rights of Gregory, by the use of whose name he had been able to veil and to promote the first hopes of his ambition, he suddenly appeared to entertain doubts of the validity of his claim. Under his authority an inferior council was assembled in his kingdom, with directions to decide between the disputants. To the surprise of both parties, this council declared the pope, for whom Ladislaus had so long and with such apparent zeal contended, unduly elected, and ratified the choice of his rival. In obedience to this decision of his council, the king gave notice to Gregory, that, being now convinced of the impiety of his pretensions, he could no longer afford in his dominions asylum and sanctuary to a schismatic so entirely unsupported by the officers and fathers of the Church.

If Gregory were astounded at this desertion of his cause by its last advocate, John was no less deceived. Already he began to imagine and to enjoy in fancy the peaceful exercise of the high functions committed to his charge. Ladislaus had constituted the whole difficulty in the way of adjustment, when, in the council of Pisa, the claims of Gregory and Benedict had both been put aside; and, this difficulty removed, all the wide field of ambition extended itself before the eager gaze of the ambitious priest. As a first step to the consolidation of his strength, and of the permanency of his rule, he purchased a peace from the now self-con-

victed Ladislaus ; and, reposing upon that treaty, he addressed his cares to the organization of his state. In full security on the faith of this treaty, John had made no preparation for resistance. His best officers were now in the service of the king of Naples ; and even the enemies of that prince were hardly bound to the interests of John sufficiently to hazard a new war for their support. That Sforza, whom we have already beheld as a soldier of fortune at Pisa, now ranked among the most illustrious of the many bold leaders who, in the troubles of Italy, arose to distinguish themselves and their era. His services had been secured by the wily Ladislaus, and nothing then remained in the party of John to be opposed to him. The first unexpected report of the hostile arrival of this prince upon his boundaries, was quickly followed by the entrance of his captain into the apostolic city ; and John, in the moment that he had hoped to possess himself of the undisputed authority which at an earlier period had been the arbiter of crowns and of monarchs, now found himself a fugitive, and the dignity and power of his sacred office still in abeyance. Even Florence did not dare to offer him a refuge ; the victorious entry of the army of Ladislaus upon the Roman state had terrified her citizens, who recoiled from the thought of a war with so faithless an enemy. But peace was not now to be purchased by abstinence from hostility. Ladislaus had resolved upon the deposition of John as a preliminary to the final occupation of his temporalities. On this subject Florence was to explain herself. She had refused to receive the fugitive pope ; but this was not sufficient to satisfy the demands of his implacable enemy. She was therefore compelled, as the price of a dishonourable and precarious peace, to abandon his cause and to consent to his deposition. Even to these disgraceful conditions that people was brought to agree who had formerly refused to bend before the imperial strength of German Henry ; who had resisted

the arms of Castruccio, who had maintained the spirit of their independence against the insidious advances of the Bohemian king, and preserved the liberty of Italy against the treacherous intrigues and atrocious violence of the duke of Milan.

In the vices of Ladislaus, however, the now careless people of Florence found that deliverance which they could no longer discover in their own energies. The character of this prince may stand before the world and challenge its history to produce one formed for greater deeds. Cool, calculating, and dispassionate, in the prosecution of his interests, no touch of human sympathy was ever known to move him from the pursuit of a desired object; no feeling of compassion ever softened the ferocity of his enmity; no community of faith or of blood, no long service, ever raised up a friendship to interfere with the accomplishment of his purpose. As a warrior, however, he wanted nothing to gain the admiration of his own soldiers, or to daunt the forces of an enemy. Without love, without faith, without feeling, and without religion, he stood forth the model of a conqueror, the admiration of ignorant wonder which trembles at every demonstration of strength; but to the reflecting mind, the scourge of nature and the instrument of ill; the natural and inevitable chastisement of national delinquency. Incapable of any emotion of sympathy with his fellow-men, the king of Naples was a selfish sensualist; and the indulgence of his private vices avenged his country of his public crimes.* Mac-

* The death of Ladislaus, which has been variously ascribed to a number of diseases, is universally attributed to the criminal indulgence of his inordinate appetites. The following note from a grave historian contains matter of reflection for the medical profession, and involves an interesting question in medical history:—"Vedi Giornalia napoletani (*rer. Ital. tom. 21.*) Si racconta dagli Storici di quel tempo, che la morte fu causata da un malore attaccatogli da una meretrice perugina. *Giannone istor. lib. 24. cap. 8.* racconta la causa della sua malattia con qualche varietà che ha tutta l'aria di favola, che amoreggiando la figlia di un medico di Perugia, questi corrotto dai denari de' Fiorentini, posponendo al guadagno la

chiavelli has said that Florence had been ever more indebted to death than to her own valour for her prosperity. The death of Castruccio, he observes, preserved her from the destruction threatened by his arms; the death of the archbishop of Milan next rescued her from the intrigues of that wily politician; and afterwards that of the conte di Virtu interposed to save her yet a second time from a still more galling oppression of another member of the infamous house of Visconti. Now an enemy more terrible, and not less destitute, than even the worst of these, of every quality which could conciliate affection or esteem, was meditating her ruin, and preparing to erect one wide misrule of tyranny throughout her states; and again, in the absence of all hope, the hand of death was extended in her behalf, and the enemy of her liberty was carried off in the moment of the accomplishment of his boundless desires.

The death of Ladislaus awakened the cities of Italy to a lively sense of the danger which had impended over them during his life. . From the Alps to the sea, the whole populations of the peninsula in its various distributions had been, from the moment of his accession to the throne, in the tumult of war, of revolution, and of political intrigue: in an instant the return of peace with his decease declared how great had been his power, how great the influence of individual ambition to convulse the order of society in their cities, and to undermine or beat down the fabric of their liberties. In the death of Ladislaus the influence of the Neapolitan throne in Italy received a fatal blow. His sister

vita della figlia, compose un venefico unguento, onde avvelenasse le sorgenti della vita, e del piacere, facendo credere alla figlia che produrrebbe un effetto tale, per cui il Re sarebbe di lei per sempre per dutamente innamorata. Negli avanzamenti così grandi della fisica, e chimica moderna non si conosce un veleno capace di produrre quell' effetto, ed è difficile immaginare, che fosse noto al medico perugino. Il caso però di Ladislao è singolare, giacchè ha tutti i sintomi della lue venerea allora ignota. L'Ammirato nella vita di Ladislao asserisce che quel veleno era sugo di Napello."—*Pignotti*.

succeeded him not less in the course of libertinage in which he had lived and died, than in the possession of his now extended dominions. But much that might be conceded to the resolution of Ladislaus would be refused to the mere wantonness of his sister; all the strength of her kingdom was wasted in the quarrels of the pretenders to her promiscuous favour; and the cities which had in the time of her brother trembled at the progress of the Neapolitan power, now rested from their terrors in the manifest prostration of the monarchical influence. It is obvious that, as in Florence, for a time the republican spirit had made itself an instrument of the name of religion and the papal cause to keep at bay the arms of the emperor, so in Naples the same pretence and the same cause had been assumed as a pretext for the prosecution of the schemes of an unlimited ambition, and had served to strengthen the influence of kingly power among the free states of Italy.

But the dissensions of the church itself had produced a new state of affairs. The influence of Rome was no longer to extend over the monarchs of nations. Much power still was left to her, it is true; but this power, now derived from the acquiescence of princes, depended alone on the skill with which the successor of St. Peter might make his account of their quarrels. On the release of Italy from the fears of the Neapolitan usurpations, all the cities directed their attention to the concerns of the church.

In the dread of Ladislaus, John had applied for aid to all the cities which had seemed to preserve the independence of their governments; and, to induce them to take up his quarrel, he had promised that he would call a new council for the final adjudication of his claim to the chair which he occupied, and the settlement of the still recurring differences in the church. On the death of his great enemy, the crafty prelate would gladly have avoided the fulfilment of his en-

gagement. He had been elected under peculiar circumstances, and to heal a division in the church which his election had, on the contrary, increased; many reasons indicated his deposition, and the choice of a person uncommitted in the former difficulties, as the only means of restoring the peace of the church and the sacred character of the ecclesiastical dignity. All this John foresaw, but the public voice imperatively demanded the convening of the promised council; and accordingly it assembled at Constance, and in a numerous sitting proceeded to the work of pacification and reform. Every individual who had ever enjoyed the name and honours so long a cause of dispute, this council formally deposed, and elected another from the house of Colonna, who, with the name of Martin V., ascended the pontifical throne.

So changed was now the aspect of affairs in Italy, that resistance to the decree of the council was certain no longer to find that support which rendered before of doubtful application the name of Pope and the reproachful epithet of Antipope. There was now no ambitious aspirant who might hope to avail himself of the dissensions of the Roman state to extend over it his empire. The deposed dignitary was therefore obliged to submit; and, after having, during a portion of the troublesome reign of Ladislaus, been placed in the dangerous office against which all the envy of that aspiring prince had been directed, he was now to descend from his high state, and to receive from his more fortunate successor the privilege of re-assuming that inferior rank in the hierarchy which he had so recently used and valued only as a step that led to the throne. Re-created cardinal, the displaced pontiff took up his residence in Florence, and received at his death, which happened soon after these events, the honours and the obsequies which belonged to the name that he had been compelled to lay aside. The other pretenders were in no condition to give umbrage to the new pon-

tiff; and the affairs of the church may be said to have been adjusted by the elevation of Martin.

Yet the condition of Rome was not such as to justify the occupation of the apostolic city by its now supreme head. Florence, now forward in all that could make her conspicuous, and that might ostentatiously cover the daily-failing powers of the ancient liberty, held out to him the offer of a splendid entertainment until he might, with sufficient strength and security, take peaceful possession of his subject city. The Florentine people were dazzled, and the magnificence of their government was mistaken for the manifestation of their own importance and power.

The entry of Martin into Florence was intended to mark the era of a general pacification. Among all the enemies of the different popes who had been elected and deposed by the successive councils, few had been willing to appear as the enemy of Rome or of the Church. After having been engaged in the service of John XXIII., Sforza had passed to that of his enemy; but he still could say, that, while many were pretenders to the papal seat, the hostility manifested against any one of them was no hostility to Rome. Such, however, was not the case with the Florentine general Braccio da Montone, lord of Perugia. All Italy was divided in the admiration of these rival warriors. With almost equal success they warred upon opposite sides, and no contest was long conducted under the guidance of one of them before the courage and valour of the other was opposed to him. Sforza Attendoli, however, was still a soldier of fortune; he might, therefore, be at one moment found at the head of the forces of the Pope, and at another in the service of the aspiring Ladislaus. The pretensions of the Roman see to the occupation of many cities, which, in its difficulties, had fallen from its rule, placed, on the one hand, the lord of Perugia in necessary opposition to the interests of the Church; and, although he had

been engaged to lead the arms of Florence against the troops of Ladislaus, the greater terror which the conquests of that ambitious prince had spread among the smaller states might have caused this combination, though the natural opposition of Braccio to the papal power continued unaltered. Accordingly his opposition to the antipopes had been altogether of a political nature, and might be renewed, when the fear of Ladislaus no longer interposed against a more legitimate possessor of the sacred seat.

To make more perfect the union of interests which she had laboured to combine in this restoration of the Church's quiet, Florence invited the leader of her armies, the jealous enemy of her ancient ally, to bear also his part in the present reconciliation, and to receive from the lips of the bishop, who had been chosen to heal the wounds of the bleeding church, the benediction of pardon and peace. On this invitation Braccio repaired to Florence. At the head of four hundred warriors, shining in armour or covered with the scars of so many battles, ostentatiously displayed, he made his entry into the city. The highest magistrates of the cities over which he ruled, and which had, for the greater part, been severed from the papal dominions, accompanied him in his progress through the city to the habitation of the prelate before whom he was now to justify his conquests. Jousts, games, and festivals, delighted the people during the whole period of his sojourn in Florence; and six thousand lances, broken in these warlike sports in which the citizens mingled with the veterans of his troop, afforded to Florence the peaceful representation of the fields in which their champions had conquered in their cause. In comparison with the splendour that attested his presence among them, they looked in vain for the gratifications which they might have anticipated from the visit of the great head of the church. In his name, and for his sake, they had fought since the founding of their liberties;

nor ever was the influence of his authority absent from their quarrels and their counsels. Yet, as in Rome the exercise of his power had never been proportionate to the extent of his foreign influence, and as, even when his undisputed word laid nations under interdict, and changed the crowns of kings, he had never been able to subdue the turbulence of his domestic barons, or to reduce the rebellious spirits of his Romans to a patient slavery, so now in Florence it would appear that a too intimate acquaintance with the sacred dignity of the pontificate had deadened the interest and the awe with which the most zealous of his advocates had dwelt upon the name and person of the father of their faith. With the increase of admiration on the one hand, diminished respect on the other, and every voice which raised in song the praises of the bold warrior of the Republic, found answer in the light tone of mockery that contrasted with his strength the feeble affectation of power on the part of another now neglected guest, the former enemy of his state and at this moment the jealous witness of his popularity.*

In the midst of these rejoicings the Florentines were scarcely sensible of the loss which they were called upon to sustain in the persons of several of their most conspicuous statesmen and illustrious leaders. Maso degli Albizzi had died some years before, A. D. 1417, and the power which had made him, as it were, a chief in the republic, descended to his son. The name of this individual is too closely connected with the fate of Flo-

* "I ragazzi per le strade andavano cantando: "Papa Martino—Non vale un quattrino ec." Vedasi Leonardo Aret. *Commen.* ove si scorge che con questo letterato, con cui avea familiarità, si spassionava il Papa degli scherni de' Fiorentini, e la pena che Leonardo si diè per placarlo: "*Ambulabat ille de biblioteca ad fenestram quæ hortos respicit: cum aliquot spatia tacitus confecisset, deflexit et vestigio iter a me, quumque proxime se admovisset porrecto in me vultu, brachioque molliter elato, Martinus inquit Papa quadrantem non valet?*" —Pignotti.

tence to receive the mention merely which his ability would seem to demand. Many others in Florence, whose names have barely reached our age, were not inferior to Maso degli Albizzi in all that should have secured the respect of their contemporaries; but the name of Albizzi is connected with the downfall of Florentine liberty; the Albizzi were themselves the precursors of a still more treacherous family, and the popular confidence, which gave to them their influence, and through them exalted over the democracy the watchful and insidious party of the nobility, was abused into the renunciation of the popular liberty. Maso had witnessed all the revolutions of his country during the greater part of a century; he had belonged to the aristocracy which rose upon the ruins of the old nobility, and had seen the overthrow of his party in the triumph of the democratic principle. That triumph had cost him the life of an uncle, and many years of proscription to himself. Yet he had outlived all this; he had beheld the revolution of the Ciompi, the struggles of the popular power for supremacy, its victory and its decline; nor did he die until he had seen the full developement of that principle which was at last to take from his country its high pre-eminence of liberty, and change the virtues of a simple people into the corruptions of a nation of slaves; the open daring of a government, which, as it was but a popular organ, could have nothing to conceal from the people, into the timid cruelty of a despotic court, which trembled while it oppressed, and oppressed with aggravated cruelty because it felt its fear.*

* "The regeneration of liberty in Italy was signalised still more, if possible, by the developement of the moral than by that of the intellectual character of the Italians. The sympathy existing among fellow-citizens, from the habit of living for each other and by each other,—of connecting every thing with the good of all,—produced in republics virtues which despotic estates cannot even imagine. Man must have a country, before he can conceive the duty of sacrificing himself for it. The arts of intrigue and flattery are recommenda-

To the death of Albizzi succeeded in a few years that of Gino Capponi. In the reputation of Capponi there is nothing to interfere with our admiration. High trusts and honours left him poor, as though the offer of wealth possessed no temptations; and the interests of the public confided to his charge were returned to it untainted and unimpaired by the breath of ambition. Unbending in the performance of every duty which his country required at his hands, he appears to have cast off in her cause all feelings and all affections that might interfere with the prosecution of her advantage. That he was not of a heart inclined to cruelty, his conduct to the conquered Pisans rendered manifest; yet while Pisa was the enemy of Florence, and when Florence had decreed her destruction as requisite to the advancement of the Florentine prosperity, no cry of nature had sufficed to melt his heart, or turn him from the inflexible pursuit of his country's gain. The language of one brief exhortation to his son spoke all his heart, and gave the key to all the peculiarities of his character,—“To the service of thy country prefer not even thy soul.” Of all the labours of his life, the reduction of Pisa must have seemed greatest in the eyes of his contemporaries; but later ages find, in the history of that event composed by him, and in the narration of the rising of the Ciompi, the evidences of a pure and noble mind; a singleness of purpose and a simplicity of heart which adds a moral greatness to his character, and puts him far above the fame of those whose memory is only lasting as it is linked with the misfortunes of their country.

The taking of Pisa and the successful resistance of

tions to a master; his favour is gained by encouraging his vices: and, in his turn, he recompenses those who serve him at the expense of morality, by dividing with them his power. But to please the people, to rise by the people, virtues must be exhibited to them, not vices: the sympathy of all is gained only by that which is most honourable in each.”—*Sismondi*.

Ladislaus had raised the Florentine state to a height of power which was equalled only by its prosperity.

A few years of peace now afforded an opportunity of turning to beneficial account the advantages which Florence had gained. Even the momentary contests in which she became engaged against the Genoese, and which can scarcely be considered as sufficiently important, in a military point of view, to be called an interruption of her public peace, produced important results to her commerce. If the Genoese had hoped to preserve, in the independence of Pisa, a commercial balance in the affairs of the trading people on that side of Italy, the victory of the Florentines, and their occupation of the Porto Pisano, rendered vain that hope. The possession of Leghorn could now become but a fruitful source of dissension between Florence and Genoa so long as it remained to the latter; and the impossibility of retaining it for a period of great length on any terms, soon made her willing, for a reasonable price, to yield it at once.

With this accession of territory Florence scarcely saw a limit to her advancement. Her ambassadors, now no longer confined to the humble office of bearing despatches to the cities that were bounded by the same seas and mountains, bore the name of her people to remote countries of other continents; and treaties of amity and commerce with the Soldan of Egypt, and with other distant potentates, declared at once the ambition, the wealth, and the prosperity of the republic. Venice alone, in Europe, could dispute with her the superiority in enterprise and wealth; and the narrow limits of these popular governments dispensed to the widest kingdoms of despotic princes the benefits of commerce and the medium of commercial intercourse. Two millions of florins, equal to three millions five hundred and fifty-two thousand dollars at the present day, is estimated to have been the actual capital then circulated in Florence.

Thus flourishing in the enjoyment of tranquillity, and spreading thus their power by commercial influence wherever the trade of Europe extended, the Florentines were averse to any interruption of the peace in which they saw themselves rising above the highest eminence to which their ambition had ever aspired. In the troubles of the kingdom of Naples, in which an earnest endeavour was made to enlist on either side the various states of Italy, the Florentines kept aloof for a time ; but, drawn at last into the quarrel, they matched again the valour of their old officer against the troops of the kingdom led by Sforza, and trusting to the chance of war for the decision of a question in which their own interests were so little involved, they saw without concern the energies and resources of the kingdom wasted in the disgraceful brawlings of a royal wanton's paramours.

In this contest the two rivals, Sforza and Braccio, perished. They had grown up together in rivalry of arms ; to neither had their countrymen been able to assign the superiority ; nor had any leader, in the absence of one of these, been thought a security against the arms of the other.* From the first disturbances of Florence, when the feuds of the Buondelmonti and the

* "Among the numerous captains who had been formed in the school of Alberic da Barbiano, there were two regarded as infinitely superior to all others, from the progress which they had made in the art of war. Braccio da Montone had studied how to make his army manageable by augmenting the number of officers, and by accustoming it to fight in detached bodies which dispersed and rallied at will. The other was Sforza Attendolo, equally distinguished in military tactics ; instead of adopting the new method of Braccio, he applied himself to bringing the ancient system to perfection. He continued to move his army in large masses ; which no one conducted with such unison and steadiness. Braccio distinguished himself by impetuous valour, by prompt and decisive action, and sometimes by trusting to chance : Sforza, by prudent, steady, and cool conduct. All the soldiers of fortune in Italy soon attached themselves to one or other of these two captains ; who, nearly of the same age, and having made their first campaigns together, now found themselves opposed to each other in a rivalry of interest and glory. The name of the Bracceschi school was given to the band of soldiers of the one, and Sforzeschi to the other."—*Sismondi*.

Amidei had presented to the parties of the Guelphs and Ghibelines a pretext for dividing the city, and arraying in Florence the friends of the emperor against the partizans of the Church, the ambition of the kings of Naples had never ceased to mingle in the quarrels of the city, or to hope for an ultimate establishment in central Italy. Now, however, at the moment in which the Florentines had reached the summit of their political power; when, in spite of the feuds which were expected to place them in the hands of a public enemy, or in the shackles of a domestic tyranny, they held the balance of power in the peninsula, the long aspirations of the princees of Calabria were buried in the ruins of the Neapolitan throne, and the terror of its usurpations gave place, in the minds of the republicans of Tuscany, to a feeling of compassion without the affection or esteem that makes compassion not contemptuous.

The silence imposed upon the ambition of Naples might seem for a moment the presage of better fortune for the republican cities of Italy. Florence had, however, but a few moments in which to deceive herself; nor could a just examination of the causes which led to this result have allowed her even a momentary deception. The fall of the monarchical authority had not been occasioned by the preponderance of the republican, but rather by the general decline of Italian influence beyond the peninsula, and by the general corruption of manners and morals within. Foreign interference had crushed the throne of the Calabrian princees, but no single government had arisen to check its progress or to stay its destroying effects when it should be directed in turn against the free states of the centre and the north. The true danger to the independent states of Tuscany, and indeed of all Italy, was far from being justly understood. There were those who trembled at the peril which threatened the happiness of their country from the interposition of trans-

alpine powers in the affairs and quarrels of the peninsula, and many feared the usurpations and conquests of the tyrants who temporarily obtained the ascendancy in some particular city from which they might extend their ambitious views to the subjugation of others, and to the establishment of a consolidated tyranny within the Alps. All these would naturally bend their energies to the prevention of the apprehended ill, but none in fears like these could be said to contemplate the true danger which threatened Italian independence so valued, and for which so often the privileges of freedom were resigned to a domestic oppression. Nor, indeed, have subsequent writers better marked the causes of the gradual overthrow of the independence of the cities which have become so illustrious as *the republics of the middle ages*. Yet they did not escape the profound observation of Sismondi; and that judicious and philosophic historian has justly dated the decline of Italian independence from the fall of the municipal freedom in Italy, and more especially in Tuscany.

It became, therefore, the duty of the Florentines, when the returning strength of the Visconti in Lombardy again arrayed that family in opposition to the common liberty, to watch more jealously the opportunity which their hostility might afford to popular favourites in Florence, than to make preparations for a war that should give such opportunity to the aspiring among their fellow-citizens. Very few, however, were the individuals, if there were any such, who fully comprehended the extent of this duty. The citizens generally were terrified at the progress of the Lombard arms, and forgot, in their terror, how much more formidable had been the enemies with which the commonwealth had so often contended before, and how successful it had always been in defence of its liberties. The concentrated energies of the republic in a defensive war, without the vexatious increase of the public burthens, had always been sufficient for every exigency; but

the genius of her institutions and her people was opposed to all military establishment. When, therefore, Filippo Maria Visconti had by his management reduced the provinces which had revolted from the allegiance of his house, and for a time, appeared to have renewed, with added means, the projects of his father's ambition, the example of prosperous wars and a successful policy was before the Florentines as a guide in this threatening conjuncture. The neglect of this example, and of the instruction conveyed in it, involved them in all the subsequent dangers and difficulties. Hence the usurpations of the house of Visconti became fatally connected with the destinies of the Florentine republic.

At this moment the vindictive Martin remembered the slight with which the Florentines had treated him during his sojourn in their city ; but he forgot the part which they had taken in his election, and, coldly receiving the delegation of the republicans who appealed to him against the encroachments of Visconti, he secretly threw himself into the hands of that unprincipled and unmanly tyrant, the dread of whose arms already shook the stoutest hearts, while he himself stood trembling within the guarded walls of his palace. On the death of Gian Galeazzo, in the feebleness of his sons and the intrigues of his several generals, the empire of Milan, which had been extended in his life-time over the greater part of Lombardy and no small portion of Tuscany and Romagna, was reduced to little more than the immediate territory that surrounded the city. Pisa had been taken from one of his children, even before its final cession to the people of Florence. Bologna exchanged the usurped authority of the Milanese for what it expected to find the paternal rule of the pope ; and Sienna, in the general dissolution of the power of the Visconti, re-asserted also her former liberty. The vast dominion in the north, which by the will of Gian Galeazzo was to have passed to his sons, was

for the most part divided among his officers ; and, if they ruled in the name of guardians or as delegates, they made the young princes, whose service was their first duty, the instruments of their aggrandisement. Milan, as a capital, with many other important places, had fallen to the share of Francesco Maria, the eldest son of his father, who, with the name of duke, assumed to be his successor. Pavia, with the more north-eastern cities of Verona, Vicenza, and others, had been left to the second-born, Filippo Maria, who was to govern them with the title of count.

All the vices which have made the family of the Visconti pre-cminent for crime among the betrayers or destroyers of Italian liberty, seem to have centered in the person of Francesco Maria. He was cruel beyond even the wantonness of his predecessors ; but the weakness which accompanied his cruelty, and which had been concealed in his father and uncle, was too conspicuous in him to suffer his subjects to fear ; they were indignant, therefore, rather than appalled, and their indignation decided the fate of their master.

The assassination of this imbecile tyrant, which occurred on the 16th of May, 1412, could occasion little surprise and less regret to his subjects. This event might have produced some benefit to Lombardy if it had not been for the almost simultaneous decease of Facino Cane, one of the principal among the able generals of Gian Galeazzo, to whom, on his death, he had confided the care of his children. Facino Cane had not been much more faithful to his charge than the others, who, like him, had been left to push their fortunes upon the death of their employer. He had not, however, deprived the son of Galeazzo of all sovereignty ; and, though he governed in fact, he left to the wretched heir of the former duke's ill-gotten power the only prerogative which his ambition appears to have desired, or which his mind seemed competent to enjoy ; the power of inflicting pain upon his fellow-men in un-

disturbed security.* But cruelty was an inherent characteristic of the house of Visconti. It was, therefore, not without a hope that the Milanese endured for a moment the timid barbarity of Francesco, because they knew that it was always in their power to cast him from his place.

The death of Facino, however, threw a gloom over the prospect which had assumed a momentary brightness on the death of his ward. He had held the brother of the duke a prisoner at Pavia, where he had permitted him to assume the name and outward dignity of count. But all the true power here, as at Milan, was exercised by Facino. The release of this captive it was that made the death of his guardian a public calamity, and might have caused the Milanese to wish again the disgraceful rule of Francesco, so much the more to be endured as it was never a hopeless tyranny to those who groaned under its heaviest inflictions. On this removal of all obstacles to the assumption of his father's sovereignty, Filippo Maria appeared upon the scene in such a manner as to infuse terror into the hearts of his destined subjects. They trembled yet at the recollection of the spectacles of horror which his brother's court had daily exhibited, and they shrunk from the memory of his father's atrocities. When, therefore, for an instant their successor appeared to

* "His libertinism would hardly have been remarked; he was chiefly signalized by the frightful pleasure which he sought in the practice of cruelty. He was passionately devoted to the chase; but such sports soon failed to quench his thirst for cruelty. The tortures inflicted on mute animals, not finding expression by speech, did not come up to his ferocious ideas of enjoyment. He therefore resolved to substitute men for brute animals; and caused all the criminals condemned by the tribunals to be given up to him as objects of this inhuman sport. He had his hounds fed with human flesh, in order to render them more ferocious in tearing the victims; and, when ordinary convicts were scarce, he denounced to the tribunals even the crimes in which he had participated, to obtain the condemnation of his accomplices: after which he delivered them to his huntsman, Squarcia Giramo, charged with providing for the ducal chase."—*Sismondi*.

possess a more determined boldness, and seemed to add to his inherited qualities the courage which none of his name had manifested before, new terror struck the souls of those who saw themselves returning to a yoke as odious as that from which they had just hoped to escape, and so much the more dreadful as it seemed to leave no room for hope.

The courage of Filippo was, however, but a momentary ebullition, nor did he, in the timidity of his disposition, belie the blood from which he sprung. His conquests, like those of his father, were effected by his officers : and when he had reduced to his rule the cities which had once belonged to his father, and which he had therefore looked upon as his inheritance, he could not behold without jealousy and hate the man who had restored him so valuable an heritage, but who had at the same time secured to himself all the glory and fame of the conquest. He could not, however, conceal from his own deep conviction that he owed too much to a soldier whom he himself had promoted from the ranks ; he could not deny that he had received the allegiance of the revolted cities from the hand of his general ; and he knew too well the advantage that a Visconti would have taken of such an opportunity as that which his valour, skill, and reputation now offered to Carmagnola. This jealousy of Filippo Maria preserved, most probably, the independence of Florence ; for in the wars which very soon arose between the people of that city and the duke of Milan, the former had no one to oppose to the abilities of Carmagnola. The first indirect demonstration against the republic, and which did not fail to awaken all its suspicions, was artfully made by Visconti. The Florentines had unnecessarily and indiscreetly espoused a party in the dissensions of the Neapolitans. This opportunity of renewing his designs against the free states of Tuscany was not lost upon their watchful enemy. It was enough for him that they leaned towards the party of

Alphonso of Arragon ; no other inducement was wanting to array him on the side of his rival, the prince of Anjou. The pretext thus afforded for putting on foot his designs, Visconti scarcely cared to cumber himself longer with the mask ; and when his soldiers, having taken possession of Genoa, exclaimed " to Pisa, to Pisa," he did not consider it necessary to assume the appearance of displeasure, or to offer any assurances to Florence of the honesty of his intentions in regard to her possessions.

The last enemy of Florentine liberty was now to be met, and if he could not himself extend a princely rule over the fierce republicans of Florence, he might have been satisfied for the disappointment of his own immediate purposes, by the reflection that the contest in which he had engaged her had overturned the fabric of her freedom, and banished from Italy the sacred light of its fire. From this moment commences the history of the rise of the Medicean sway, in which were buried the liberties of Italy.

We have so far traced the origin and establishment of the democracy ; we have also witnessed its decline ; a few convulsive throes yet give some signs of life in the struggles of its dissolution ; but even now the usurpation of its deceitful betrayers begins ; even here they laid the first hand to the rearing of their tyranny ; and if from this time a gleam of liberty appear to break the blackness of the coming night, it is the bright but momentary flash of the expiring light—from this time forward, if even the republican form remained, its vital principle was gone ; the efforts of the old constitution became feeble and more feeble still, until at last the renowned republic, the preserver of the rights of human liberty, the champion of humanity, after more than three hundred years of a tumultuous but glorious exemption from slavery, abandoned herself to the fatal embrace of Alexander de' Medici.

CHAPTER VI.

Origin of the Family of the Medici.—War with Visconti.—Method of levying Imposts introduced by Giovanni de' Medici.—His Death.—Siege of Lucca.—Ambition and Banishment of Cosimo de' Medici.—Disgrace of Albizzi, and Recall of Cosimo.—The Government of Florence becomes an Oligarchy.—Cosimo exercises the Supreme Controul.—Death of the Duke of Milan.—State of Italy.—Progress of the Turkish Arms in the East, and Fall of Constantinople.

THE history of Florence in the years which intervene between the first war of the republic against Visconti and the assumption of power by Lorenzo the Magnificent, may be considered as the introduction to that portion in which we are to abandon the records of a people for the story of a family. That family had long performed, in the affairs of their native city, a conspicuous part for good and for evil. So early as the division of the citizens, when the parties of the Guelphs and Ghibelines were revived by the Whites and the Blacks, the Medici were found among the most distinguished of the side to which they belonged. But flattery, at a later day, discovered them in the early primates of the city when Charlemagne first re-established its charter; and the vanity of those whose pride could find such parasites, was not displeased at the offering of their ready servility. At a much earlier date than that at which we find them in Florence, there were, doubtless, in the other cities of Italy, individuals of less or greater note, who may be cited as members of the Medicean family. They present no claim, however, to the notice of the Florentine historian, and among the many names that give lustre to the early ages of the republic in her contest with the powers of the Empire, the Medici do not appear.

In the latter part, however, of the thirteenth century, the success of the German arms compelled the chiefs

of the Guelphs who were exposed to the enmity of the emperor to seek safety in the fortified city in which his adversaries prevailed. Filippo de' Medici of Fiorano, in the Val di Mugello, was one of a great number who sought shelter in Florence, at all times the advocate of the papal cause, and therefore the protector of the Guelphs. The posterity of Filippo occupy, almost from the moment of his death, an important place in the history of his adopted country. In the numerous ramifications of his family, there is scarcely a branch that could not boast the exercise of the magisterial functions. From one of his sons, Chiarissimo, was descended that Giovanni who led the troops of the republic at Lucca, and who, after having attained the high honours of that command, fell a sacrifice at last to his own evil fortune and the ambitious designs of the duke of Athens. It was, however, in the line of his second son, Everardo, that this stranger bequeathed to his adopted country the curse of its future oppressors. To this son was born another, Everard, whose lineal descendants first usurped a popular supremacy in Florence, and finally succeeded to her ducal sceptre on the extinction of her liberties. In all the vicissitudes of the state, the offspring of this Everard became conspicuous for the most part as advocates of the democracy. He left his fortunes, which were considerable, and his name, which was then more influential in the other branches, to his sons Bicci and Giovanni; the former of whom transmitted the accumulated influence of his family to Giovanni, in whose popularity commenced the hopes and prospects of his house. It was not, however, by the usual arts that Giovanni proceeded in his attempts upon the liberties of the people.

While the authority of Filippo Maria Visconti was yet uncertain in the states which he might look upon as his inheritance, he had cautiously avoided all that could excite the fears or the jealousies of the Florentines. With the growing security of his Lombard

possessions increased the confidence of his department towards the states which he had found himself formerly obliged to conciliate. His open ambition soon left the Florentines nothing to suspect. The whole city was immediately divided on the question of the manner in which his encroachments should be met. The nobility and the party of the government clamoured for war; the wealthy, on the other hand, who had large commercial interests, and who had not been admitted into the body of the aristocracy, objected to the policy of putting themselves in the wrong by the first act of aggression. All power, however, had passed into the hands of the higher orders since the last unsuccessful attempt to restore the democracy; and as they were universally in favour of an open rupture with the duke of Milan, the war was formally resolved upon. If any thing could have been hoped from the choice of an offensive war, the mode in which it was conducted by the government was calculated to deprive it of that superior energy in which alone it might be said to offer any advantage. The occupation of the city of Forli by the forces of Visconti became the signal for the commencement of hostilities. Every thing that either party had to hope was placed on the result of the first engagement. The victory of Visconti could never have rendered subject to his rule the cities of Tuscany; but it must, in its consequences, destroy the growing aristocracy which had begun to establish itself in Florence. Unfortunately the fall of this body involved no beneficial change for the people; the strife so long carried on between these opposite parties had ended with the annihilation of the one, and the only rival of the conqueror was the individual ambition which might aspire to sovereignty.

By direction of the Council of Ten, charged with the direction of the war, the Florentine forces which had sat down before Forli were ordered to the relief of Zagonara, invested by the troops of Visconti under

Agnolo della Pergola, as a diversion in favour of the former place. In the midst of winter Carlo Malatesta, in pursuance of this order, was obliged to raise the siege of Forlì and take up his march towards Zagonara, where he was expected by the enemy. The roads, which were naturally bad at this season of the year, were rendered now almost impassable by the rain which had fallen, and which continued to fall, during the advance of the Florentines. Worn out and dispirited, they arrived at last in presence of the army of Agnolo della Pergola, advantageously posted to meet them.

In the early days of Rome, while the plebeians, yet unacknowledged by the proud patricians, were driven to the most desperate measures for the vindication of their rights, the appearance of an enemy was the pledge to them of new concessions from their oppressors, and of an extension of political liberty. The most illustrious victories, victories won even in the same ennobling cause, lose half their lustre in our own eyes, and sink in the comparison of sublimity beside the resolution of a powerful host sufficient to conquer, yet courting defeat, and offering themselves a sacrifice to secure to their fellows and their posterity the blessings in which they were themselves to have no part. Thus it was that the enemies of Rome were converted into an instrument of the advancement of Roman liberty; and thus were her early children deaf to the loud cry of self-preservation, to the alluring call of glory, and even to the reproach of a cowardly desertion of their country and their country's honour, that they might secure to their countrymen the high prerogatives without which country is but a name, and patriotism the humble virtue of a docile slave. That effect, which in the Roman armies resulted from the fixed resolution of the soldiery to build up their country's freedom, was produced on the decline of Florentine liberty by the carelessness of the people who had almost ceased to

be citizens. Their armies were now no longer arrayed for the defence of the common weal and of the common property in the government, and all the spirit that had marked their early wars had expired with the institutions for which it had been exercised.

Disordered by their painful march, the soldiers of Malatesta were rushed upon by the vigorous troops of della Pergola; "Free quarter and fair terms," exclaimed that leader as he led his forces to the attack, and every soldier in his ranks repeated the cry; a Florentine horseman, becoming unable to manage his charger, fell from his seat and was trodden to death; a momentary confusion ensued; the Milanese took no other advantage of this disorder than to repeat the offer of fair terms to those who perceived that they had it in their power to exact the most severe; large numbers threw down their arms; others fled without even the show of resistance; and a victory, which filled all Italy with the name of Visconti, and carried the influence of his arms into the heart of Tuscany, was won without a single drop of blood shed by the sword. Among the prisoners, with upwards of 3000 horse, was Malatesta, the leader in this unfortunate expedition. A greater loss of life would have been less disastrous to the Florentine magistracy. Such a defeat as that which they themselves had chiefly caused at Zagonara revealed the secret of their weakness to the duke of Milan; but it was still more fatal to their authority in its manifestation of their inefficiency to the people. This knowledge could not now be turned to the advantage of the little which still remained of the republican party; but it hastened the catastrophe of the aristocracy and of the still surviving constitution of the state, when each reverse received by the officers of the government, and the consequent increase of the public burthens, turned with growing earnestness the regards of the citizens upon some popular favourite, whose virtues, real or assumed, might interpose as a

protection against the exorbitant exactions of an oppressive and unprincipled administration.

The dominant party had not even encouraged the hope of finding in the Florentines the spirit and the vigour which they had exerted when every individual fought for the government of which he was himself or might become a part. It knew that the very dwellers within Florence were now but mercenaries in the service of the state; it had accordingly undertaken to conduct its war with Visconti by means of its pecuniary resources, the fruits of commercial prosperity; and it had now to compute the cost of its late equipment, and of the defeat which it had sustained. In this point of view the greatness of their loss might, indeed, occasion anxiety to the magistracy; 300,000 florins, it was calculated, would not fully restore their affairs; and this immense amount of money was to be raised by new impositions upon the public, now no less careful of their commercial interests than they had formerly been of their political rights; and as it had been then impossible for any administration to continue which had violated the established rights of the people, or conflicted with any political principle, so now the Albizzi had reason to apprehend a commotion, with the possible extinction of their influence, in the necessity of taxing the citizens for the support of an unpopular war.

The time had not, however, yet arrived at which the republican forms could be securely attacked; Rinaldo Albizzi, the inheritor of all his father's influence in the city, had, therefore, no immediate rival to fear; and though the exactions of his administrations were daily wearying the public with the empty name of the Republic, which now possessed nothing of the republican character, they seemed to threaten but distant dangers, which indeed might result in the established authority of some member of the existing government. Such indeed would, in most probability, have been the

case had the subsequent efforts of its councils been crowned with success. The address of this wary politician was of a nature to conciliate even those who were most exposed to the pressure of the measures of his administration, but who, in the calculation of their advantage, were not likely to prefer revolution and civil commotion to the expenses of a foreign war. New levies were therefore raised to tempt again the fortune of battle.

Braccio da Montone, the old and favourite leader of the Florentines, had left a son, around whom the adherents of his father, scattered at his death, assembled in numbers. This youth appeared to be particularly suited to the occasion as a leader for the forces of the republic, which, swelled by the reinforcement of his band, seemed fit to undertake the defence of the public interests. The youth, however, of Oddo required a moderator, and Nicolo Piccinino, a follower of the elder Braccio, and one of the most famous captains of his day, was joined with him in the command. But though it might be necessary to persuade the wealthier class of citizens as to the expediency of renewing operations against Visconti, every thing was far from being accomplished when this was effected. It was requisite, in the laying of imposts, to manage the poorer class, by which the public burthens were to be borne. The aristocracy had supported itself by a constant union of sentiment and measures against the divided and feeble opposition which might at any time be exerted against its course. On all occasions it had been the first care of that body to exempt its members from the oppressive action of their own enactments in fiscal concerns; the miserable passion of avarice increased with the progress of ambition; and while political influence was directed to the protection of accumulated treasures, the love of gain was a new incentive to ambition,—a new spur to the desire of political

preferment, to be used for the satisfaction of avarice no less than for the gratification of pride.

New taxes were now to be raised, and all the address of the party in power would be required to preserve the exemption of the favoured class, and not to shock too rudely the feelings of those whose interests were to be sacrificed. For a moment, however, the influence of this party had been lost in the general sensation excited by the defeat at Zagonara and the preparation for a second encounter. The citizens appeared to have resumed some of their boldness. They created a commission of twenty to adjust the difficult matter of apportioning the new impositions. Those who had long been accustomed to exemption, now found themselves involved in the consequences of their ill-advised counsels. Discontented and terrified, and trembling for their long-abused prerogatives, the heads of the aristocracy were driven to concert the means of their preservation. Rinaldo degli Albizzi was now the foremost in intrigue as he had been the foremost in oppression. He reminded his comrades of the revolution of the Ciompi; how a momentary exercise of power had intoxicated the people, and led them with eager impetuosity to the demolition of the established orders of the state. He pointed out to them that the same class of citizens was now again presuming to busy itself with the affairs of state, which, since the counter-revolution in the time of Alberti, it had abandoned to the higher ranks; that it had already exerted its power in the mode of laying and apportioning the public burthens; and that this successful exercise of strength would inevitably encourage it to seek for the restoration of the official franchise, if not to appropriate it exclusively. In conclusion, he advised that while the administration remained in their hands, it became them to use it for their own preservation, by reducing the influence of the Lower Arts in the councils. This, he

assured them, could only be effected by diminishing the number of those Arts themselves.

The next in authority to Albizzi in this meeting, and in the direction of the government, was Nicolo da Uzzano, an open enemy of Giovanni de' Medici, whose removal he had long advised to his party as that of a dangerous advocate of the popular privileges. Now, indeed, he acknowledged that it was impossible ; now the moment for successful boldness was passed ; and he who had long contended for the banishment of Giovanni, was now too well convinced of the popularity of that citizen ; a popularity which had increased in equal ratio with the decline of the aristocracy, and which had now attained an unapproachable eminence, and a terrible impulse by the failure of measures which he had disapproved, and the imposition of burthens, the necessity of which, as a consequence of those measures, he had foreseen and endeavoured to avert. Now, therefore, it became necessary to gain this powerful individual, or to abandon all hope of reducing the people over whose interests he watched. Rinaldo degli Albizzi undertook the charge of tampering with the stern republican or crafty politician.

Whatever were the views of Albizzi and his party against the person of Giovanni de' Medici in the result, it was at the moment necessary to invite him, with the most flattering acknowledgment of his authority, to assume with them the government of the city. But whether the honesty or the policy of Giovanni rejected the offer, he could not but comprehend the incalculable loss of real power which must accrue to him upon his exercise of any official authority not derived from the people, and in conjunction with their enemies. He therefore calmly and firmly declined to participate in the projected treason against the municipal rights of the citizens ; and, not content with declaring his attachment to the existing order of things, he counselled in turn, or pretended to counsel, the conversion of Al-

bizzi to the popular party. "If," said he, "you examine well the history of past events, you will be less forward in this undertaking. For those who now urge you to the treachery, when by your means they shall have deprived the people of their rights, will, by the aid of the people themselves thus made hostile to you, deprive you of that authority which now you enjoy. Benedetto Alberti, by the persuasions of those who loved him not, consented to the death of his colleagues and the revolution of the state; but he perished in exile, banished by those to whose pernicious counsels he had lent a yielding ear. So also would it happen to you." The allusion to the fate of Benedetto Alberti was not lost to Albizzi; he knew that he could never occupy the place of Alberti, either in his fortune or his adversity; but he likewise understood that Giovanni, who really now occupied the position of the old patriot, was fully aware of the part which had been acted towards him, and of the part also which it was intended he should act.

The conference ended, therefore, in nothing, except the more certain conviction of Albizzi and his party that the populace had found at last an individual to adopt their quarrel against the aristocracy, and to absorb in his single person the influence which had been divided among the exclusive members of the oligarchy. Giovanni de' Medici might prove, indeed, of a disposition too little enterprising to make him personally dangerous; but the popularity attached to his name was not confined to himself; and the apparent absence of ambitious designs in him might render him doubly dangerous for the popularity which he should transmit to his children. Meanwhile the war was carried on, and the Council of Ten prepared again to direct it from their cabinet. The army, in obedience to their command, was carried in the heart of the winter towards Faenza, which it was ordered to reduce. No remonstrance of the leaders availed; the Council had deter-

mined the reduction of Faenza, and, with a perfect understanding of the difficulty to which they were ordered, Piccinino and Oddo began their march. The enemy was again prepared for them; and in another almost bloodless fight the army of the Florentines was beaten and dispersed. Oddo was, however, among the slain, and Piccinino himself was carried a prisoner, with many of his soldiers, to Faenza. His services here, as a prisoner, became of more avail to the republic than they had been when he stood at the head of her armies. Manfredi, the lord of Faenza, was induced by his representations to abandon the cause of the duke; and the tidings that this respectable leader would, with Piccinino, assume the command of their forces, diminished the consternation of the people at the news of the defeat which they had sustained. Thus unfortunate in Tuscany, they yet carried on the contest with some vigour in the territory of Genoa, in which, aided by their ally Alfonso of Arragon, they effected several important conquests. Still, however, within their own borders every thing was adverse to them. Guido Torello had succeeded to Agnolo della Pergola as leader of the ducal forces, nor was he less successful in his operations. In two successive engagements he defeated his adversary and broke the power of the Florentines, who now, indeed, began to despair of longer continuing the war unassisted against Visconti, and the daily increasing encroachments of the northern rule. Nor was defeat alone the only evil of the Florentines, or the only cause of dismay to the party which had advocated the war, and to the people who had weakly suffered themselves to be involved in it. Defection not only thinned their ranks, but, spreading among the officers, on whom they had placed their sole dependence, deprived them of the services of their most trusted commanders. Piccinino, disgusted with the ignorant pretensions of the government and council, by whose interference his plans had been frustrated,

and his military skill brought into question or rendered vain at least, deserted to the duke, and numbers of the most renowned of his fellow-captains followed in his steps.

At almost the same moment Visconti sustained a similar but far greater loss of the same nature. The count of Carmagnola had been elevated from the lowest condition by the discernment of Filippo. In the only battle in which that prince had ventured to expose his person, he had witnessed the most striking instances of cool intrepidity exhibited by Carmagnola, then a soldier in the ranks. The issue had abundantly justified the favour of the duke ; town yielded after town to his rule, and every addition of territorial strength, which spread the terror of his name among the people who had trembled before at his father's ambition, seemed to be the bounty of Carmagnola's hand. The most illustrious captains, when opposed to him, were shorn of their glory ; and the hopes of Visconti might have looked through him to the establishment of the long-desired sovereignty over one united kingdom in Italy. But ambition was not the strongest passion of the family, whose vices and whose character were all embodied in the person of its present representative. Envy, avarice, and jealousy, were even more striking characteristics of the tyrants of Lombardy. Every new evidence of ability in his general was to Filippo a secret reproach ; nor did the demonstration of a zealous fidelity in his servant soften the asperity of his hatred.

Disgusted with the ingratitude of his master, Carmagnola resolved to abandon his cause, and to exchange his service for that of one who should be better able to appreciate the value of his aid. The Venetian republic appeared to offer the widest field to his honest ambition. He presented himself accordingly to her senate, to which he made an exposition of his wrongs sustained at the hands of a prince whom he

had too faithfully served, with an offer of bestowing upon their state that ability which he had formerly exerted against them so successfully, and which his acquaintance with the designs of Visconti, his character, and his means, would now render doubly efficacious in the possession of his enemies. The senate recoiled for a moment from his advances; the treacherous character of the ducal house of Milan made suspected all who had been connected with its intrigues and its interests. An attempt was at that moment discovered, directed against the life of Carmagnola, and the careful scrutiny of the Venetian police succeeded in tracing it to the instigation of the duke of Milan; in an instant all the suspicions of the state were hushed, and Carmagnola was placed at the head of its military array.

All the reverses of the Florentines were more than atoned for by this desertion of the great support of Visconti. In the last despair of opposing the usurpations of that ambitious tyrant, they had applied to the Venetians, but with little success. They had represented to them the danger to which they were themselves exposed by the victories of the aspiring conqueror of the north. They acknowledged that they also had been remiss in allowing, with too great carelessness, the progress of Visconti's arms; and they entreated the Venetians, while it seemed that there might yet be time, to unite with them for the safety of Italy. "We can no longer make war with him unaided and alone; if Venice join not to repress the ambition of the common enemy, Florence shall lay down her arms; but let Venice remember, that if she be willing to put a crown upon the head of Filippo, Florence may aid him to convert it into a crown imperial; if the Venetians be willing to put a sceptre in his hands, the Florentines may assist him to extend its control over one consolidated realm within the Alps." The Venetians were moved but not convinced by these persuasions.

An offensive war for the extension of their territory might offer inducements to their senate, but the careful policy of its members could with difficulty be impelled to the commission of aggressive acts for the purpose of defence. While still undecided in their course, the Venetians received the offer of Carmagnola's aid, as related above; and when he opened, as he was enabled to do, from his long acquaintance with the secret designs of Visconti's bosom, his plans of aggrandisement against the Venetian state and influence, when he proceeded to prove to them that not only did the duke of Milan contemplate in the extension of his rule the ruin of the prosperity of Venice, but even the extinction of Venetian liberty, the senate appeared to open its eyes to the true danger of its condition, and to the peril of Italian independence involved in that of its last advocates in Tuscany. A league was therefore formed between the two republics, and Carmagnola assumed the command of the soldiers of Venice. The fortune which had followed his arms under the banners of his former master still adhered to him, and the duke of Milan was scarcely informed of the league which had been consummated against him, and of the choice of his old follower as a leader of the hostile forces, when the news of the conquest or defection of Brescia and the Brescian territory came as the first reproof of his ingratitude. The war thus carried into Lombardy effected a powerful diversion in favour of the Florentines, who now expected to inflict upon the states of Visconti the evils under which they had suffered themselves. They dispatched, therefore, four thousand horse and seven thousand foot, under the command of Nicholas, marquis of Ferrara, to co-operate with Carmagnola in the prosecution of the war.

Notwithstanding, however, the courage which their league with the Venetians imparted to the advocates of the war in Florence, the opposite party was still opposed to its continuance. It was therefore not

without the great satisfaction of both sides that overtures were made by the duke of Milan through the mediation of the pope, who had, during the whole conduct of the war, been the dissembling friend of either side ; bound by interests of policy to the principles for which the Florentines had taken up arms, but in secret the abettor of the designs of Visconti, from hatred of the insolent republicans who had wounded the priestly pride when the insubordination of his own subjects had kept him in dependence upon their bounty.* The friends of the government who had urged the undertaking of this war, were glad to bring it to such a termination as should justify its commencement, and the anxiety of Visconti to break the formidable league which had been concluded against him, incited him to offer the most advantageous terms to the several parties. Concessions of great commercial importance and value were made to the Florentines ; these, it was hoped, might reconcile those, in the termination of the contest, who had been most opposed to its commencement. On the other hand the peace party, which had been in fact the great majority of the whole population, beheld in this adjustment the return of quiet, and of all the advantages which depend on peace to a commercial community. All this appeared to promise a restoration of public confidence to the administration which had been so lately the object of little less than universal execration. But important accounts were to be settled, and reckonings were to be made, which could not be otherwise than appalling to a people, who, like the Florentines, had taken wealth as the basis of power, and who now calculated the pecuniary cost of every defeat as the criterion of its political importance. In a war of three years, 2,500,000 florins had been levied by exactions on the populace ; but the richest had not borne even a small proportion of this

* See note, page 166.

overwhelming expense. The citizens were aghast at the contemplation of such an unexampled profusion ; and one of their historians, persuaded of the unprincipled partiality which had made the common oppression a source of private gain, declared that the republic was at an end, unless each year the people should resolve to sacrifice a number of the highest and most affluent who had speculated, and would yet speculate, on the public griefs.

Even the partial satisfaction derived from this peace soon disappeared, when the prospects of its benefits were proved illusory by the new preparations of Visconti for the renewal of hostilities. The object of the peace had been answered on his part ; Florence was now reduced to dependence on her own resources in a war with Milan, and the nobles and wealthy subjects of Filippo were willing to incur the whole expense of a war for the humiliation of an arrogant republic, whose institutions reproached their slavery, and whose enterprize in the peaceful arts of commerce seemed to be advancing her in power and influence before the warlike but dependent governments of the north. Thus provided with all the necessaries for the conduct of a successful campaign, the tyrant of Milan was well aware of the advantage with which he should re-commence the contest with a people, who, even if they were themselves desirous of hostilities, would carefully compute the promise which they might reasonably afford of loss or gain. He therefore determined at once to avail himself of the unanimous desire of his wealthiest subjects, and, declaring war against Florence, drove her at once to the imposition of new burthens upon an already restive and dissatisfied population. The very acknowledgment of the government that new exactions were to be resorted to, aroused the indignation of the citizens, and the re-commencement of hostilities, with the consequent call for new resources, furnished

additional opportunities to Giovanni de' Medici for advancing the popularity of his name.

Under the frugal policy of the early republic, Florence had obtained a revenue of infinitely greater amount than the expenses of her simple form of government made necessary. Confining her ambition to the legitimate objects of national glory, she afforded to her executive no pretext, for domestic tyranny and oppression, in the intricacies of her foreign relations. Her government was simply the machine through which the will of the people assumed a certain form and consistency ; and being instituted according to the constitutional requisitions, or, as it may be said in other words, conformably to the popular opinion, its operations were intended to be, and for the most really were, as the action of a combination of mechanical powers. Her whole political œconomy, in its simple purity, may be compared with the system of nature in the animal œconomy, in which all the important functions "subservient to the preservation of the individual," are entirely uncontrolled by his will, act by no impulse, and are subject to no direction but the natural physical laws which govern the combination of their properties. The action of the involuntary muscles, the beating of the heart, the circulation of the blood, the necessary result of animal organization, furnish an illustration of what in the minds of the Florentines should constitute a republican government ; masters themselves of its constitution or organization, they required that its only offices should consist of the inevitable, and, as it were, involuntary performance of functions dependent thereon, without the exercise of reflection or will. If the philosophy of this theory be reducible to actual practice, it need but little vindication as the true and only spirit of republican government.

The accumulation of wealth, however, was accompanied step by step by a radical change in the po-

litical character, and consequently in the political system. Enough is already before the reader to enable him to form a competent judgment of the causes of this change. He may not, probably, be willing to consider it as correspondent to the increase of the public treasure ; but he will probably infer, that the expensive wars and the entangling alliances, in which the pecuniary means of the city had been as arms to her, and out of which arose the power that destroyed her liberties, were closely connected with an extended confidence in the treasures of the state ; he will, it seems to us, agree, that the purity of her first institutions could have been protected by no more certain bulwark than that of a restricted treasury.

The whole expenses of the government, in the time of Villani, required but the annual sum of 40,000 florins ; while the revenue of the city, with its dependencies, yielded, according to that historian, at least 300,000 ; Villani died A. D. 1348 ; not yet a century had passed away since the period during which he wrote ; and now the annual income of 300,000 florins, with all that the republic might have saved, was not sufficient to meet the slightest exigency of the state. Already we have seen the manner in which it had been driven to the imposition of new burthens for the necessities of the government. The history of manners, in connexion with the political history of nations, gives ample evidence of the action and counteraction of the moral and the political frames of society. If public opinion be the basis of government, it is no less certain that the nature of the government tends to modify the public character. In Florence the frugality of the administration reflected the simplicity of the citizens ; and afterwards, when an ostentatious Signory succeeded to the unaffected offices of the democracy ; when an ambitious craving after influence in the concerns of other states superseded the patriotic love of

real independence ; the people had acquired a new regard for wealth, the medium, as it had now been rendered by the public authorities, of splendour and power. Every year then made increased exactions necessary ; the citizens had learned to value the foreign influence for which they had been made to sacrifice the higher prerogatives of a free and sovereign people ; domestic liberty had perished, but the price of its ruin was yet to be paid ; the successors of the old republican officers had no resources, except those which might be derived from the public ; but the public were now more than ever attached to the possession of that wealth, a part of which had become necessary to the designs of their rulers, and to the attaining of that end which they themselves required now as indispensable. In this incompatibility of interests between a people and their rulers, an incompatibility which had never existed between a people and their servants, may be found the seeds of half, or more than half, of all the revolutions of empires.

The first and most plausible means of procuring a revenue, thus made necessary by the increasing demands of the state, appears in the nature of a loan ; and while the demand was light, above the ordinary taxation, there were many who might be willing to think such an investment no unprofitable speculation. Very soon, however, in Florence the voluntary contributions in this kind failed to meet the exigency of the occasion, because, in proportion as the pressure became severe, and the prospect of security less firm, the holders of capital became anxious to withdraw the funds so invested, and refused to make the farther advances required. The next resort of the government, and which might savour least of oppression, was to raise the requisite amount still in the name of a loan, but by a process which should make the contribution compulsory. Large sums of money thus withdrawn from commercial speculations, would naturally superinduce

all the distress among the indigent or moderately rich, in which the interruption of the ordinary sources of profit among the wealthy inevitably results. Another inconvenience which attended the necessity of this extortion, and one of which the people loudly complained, was the inequality with which it was made to bear upon particular classes, or rather the partiality with which the revenue laws were executed to the prejudice of the poor. The affluent were for the most part connected with the authorities; and, as we have already perceived, one object of their desire in the possession of their extended jurisdiction was the protection of individual property, the preservation of aristocratic influence in the increase of its medium of power.*

Under these gradations of tyranny, and with these accumulating evils, the Florentine republic had been long falling away from its principles; the integrity of its constitution had been gradually impaired, till at last it seemed that nothing now remained for the subversion even of the ancient form, except the strength of arm and the boldness of purpose to change the thralldom under which the city had bent to a hundred masters, and transfer the allegiance of its population to a single sovereign. If Giovanni wanted this strength and this boldness, he wanted nothing of the craft required to make such advantage of the temper of the times as his temporising disposition and irresolution of purpose would allow.

More than forty years before, the displeasure of the populace at the arbitrary manner in which the burthens were levied, had compelled the administration to adopt a nominally equable method of laying and levying the imposts. The whole city, which had been divided into quarters as mentioned above,† was now still farther partitioned into sixteen *Gonfalons*, or four for each of the former divisions. From every *Gonfalon*

* See page 184.

† See page 101.

were selected four of the respective residents, and to these was committed the charge of indicating the persons subject to taxation, or, as it was entitled, to the loan to be enforced by the state. Upon the report of this singular commission, another more numerous was formed, consisting of seven companies of seven persons in each, and called therefrom the seven *Settine*. These *Settine*, seven for every *Gonfalon*, proceeded then to apportion among the indicated persons the amount to be raised ; and the reports of these several commissions were again transferred to one of the religious houses which might happen to enjoy at the moment the highest reputation for sanctity and probity ; or it may be, which might be thought most under the influence of those by whom the choice of this last commission was to be made. Here the highest and lowest assessments were struck off from the amount, and an average of the remaining total for each *Gonfalon* was made and distributed in the indicated proportions among the persons declared liable.

It was not easy to determine whether the complication of this mode was calculated more to protect the citizens or to facilitate fraud ; but, however it might operate, the dominant party were very soon enabled to overcome whatever difficulties it might for a moment have opposed to their dishonesty. The administrators of the government, not satisfied with the favour which they were sure to find in the apportionment of the levy, pretended to plead a total exemption in consideration of their public services. But these were at the same time the most affluent of the community, and, of course, the large proportions which should have fallen upon them, now distributed among the less wealthy, still farther increased the general oppression and aggravated more the general discontent.

The citizens now turned their eyes towards Giovanni de' Medici, and he was not backward in reply to their call and in the promotion of his own ambition ;

an ambition which deceived his contemporaries, and which has misled his historians, because it worked not by the usual means of murder and the sword. Even this choice of gentler means may claim for Giovanni some applause, and we may regard with less reprobation the usurpation which cannot be traced in its progress by the blood which it shed ; but we must ask ourselves, for the due apprehension of this moderation, what was the condition of the times in which his life was set ; what the inducement to bloodshed ; and what the motive for forbearance in the use of the more manifest instruments of tyranny, the sword and the axe ? Perhaps, too, it was fortunate for Giovanni that the character of his age and countrymen was hostile to the employment of force in the revolutions of their state.

Giovanni now perceived and fully understood the crisis in his fortunes and in the prospects of his house, and no crisis could have been more calculated to call forth the peculiar qualities of his mind, or more exactly suited to the habits of his disposition. He eagerly, therefore, assumed the charge which the public expectation appeared to devolve on him, and prepared himself to invent and advocate a new system of taxation for the relief of the poor and the protection of the weak. The operation of this system was called the *Catasto*, and entirely superseded the former methods employed by the government. Its first requisition compelled the registry of the property, whether real or personal, of every citizen and subject of Florence. No species of possession escaped this registry. The attempt at concealment was punished by forfeiture of the goods to the use of the state. The total amount of the various schedules which were embodied in this registry became the basis of taxation ; it was to be renewed once in every three years, and in the meanwhile the amount of each man's contribution was to remain as declared on the distribution of the registration.

A universal opposition on the part of those who had been most obnoxious to suspicion of fraud under the ancient methods, and the outcry of all the wealthiest of the citizens, bore instant testimony to the soundness of this system, and to the obstacles which it opposed to the dishonesty of the government. The wealth of Giovanni, who was reckoned among the richest of the Florentine merchants, submitted unhesitatingly by him to the operation of the Catasto, seemed to manifest as well the patriotism as the good faith of his proceedings. The people, delighted with what they had gained through his means, now thought that they might hope for still more at his hands. The most unreasonable demands, the most impracticable desires, hopes that would before have seemed almost rebellious, were now publicly proclaimed, and Giovanni was expected to effect their accomplishment. With a shew of justice it was urged that the people had been made to pay enormous sums in consequence of the exemption of the privileged class, or rather of favoured individuals. It now seemed scarcely more than an equivalent, that the surplus of their contributions calculated upon the first registration of property, should be repaid to them. For this they loudly clamoured as for a common right. It was not, indeed, without a hazard of his popularity that Giovanni himself resisted this demand; and a sacrifice of this contested point by the administration, when the popular favourite had for a moment embraced the cause of the aristocracy, might have prostrated in a moment the whole fabric of his influence. That sacrifice appeared to them too dear; they held to the treasures which they had amassed by public wrong, and the opportunity was allowed to pass. The people, satisfied with the certainty of receiving justice at the hands of the administration for the future, were induced to abandon their claim to indemnity for the past. Giovanni, therefore, immediately re-assumed his influence with the populace, or rather he had not

lost, but endangered it only by his opposition to the public will, and the weakness of his enemies had not allowed them to convert his momentary danger into an actual overthrow.

Meanwhile the war was conducted with greater vigour against the duke of Milan. If the people were not deeply interested in the contest, as believing it unnecessary and inexpedient, still they were not now as regardless of its results, since they saw its principal advocates, who werè, for the most part, the rich aristocracy, compelled to bear the greater proportion of its expense. The army of the league had taken up its post before Cremona, and when the troops of Visconti arrived to succour it, the sum of the opposing forces amounted to no less than 70,000 souls. The greatest animosity urged these contending forces to the field. All the character of the encounter was changed from that in which the Milanese had only to ask for the arms of their enemies. After a hard contested battle, which produced no result, the leader of the allied forces, Carmagnola, succeeded in surprising the general of Visconti; and eight thousand prisoners, among which was the unhappy Malatesta, who had commanded in chief, with all his baggage, artillery, and munitions of war, became the property of the conqueror. It was pretended that the advantages of this victory were not pursued by Carmagnola, and Venice, from this neglect, began to doubt his fidelity. Yet Venice had reaped all the profit of the war, and the advantageous terms which Visconti was compelled to offer her were the fruits of Carmagnola's success. The fears which Florence had entertained of the extension of sovereign power from the north were hushed. Visconti could now be no longer dangerous; and when, therefore, he offered terms to her, she was not reluctant to abandon a war which had now ceased to have any object. Peace was accordingly concluded at Ferrara in the month of April, A. D. 1428. The joy of the people,

on the confirmation of this peace, was bitterly interrupted in the same year by the death of their favourite Giovanni de' Medici. His life had been for many years a series of uninterrupted prosperity; and his death, instead of being the dissolution of the authority and influence of his house, became the signal for their still further extension, and for their triumph over all but the forms of the republic. Giovanni de' Medici was not sensible, perhaps, himself of the deep root which the favour of his name and family had taken among his fellow-citizens. His own ambition had probably never contemplated the absolute overthrow of the commonwealth for the elevation of his children. He aspired only, it may be, to controul by moral influence the affairs of the state; and the means which he had found so successful in his own case, his paternal anxiety would recommend to his sons, the inheritors of his large possessions and the successors to his place in the popular regard. The charge which he gave to them; when on the bed of death he called them to hear his last counsels, may have spoken the honest dictates of a patriot's heart; but it may have been the last directions of an ambitious father, whose ambition was tempered by habitual prudence and the caution of a long life passed in political intrigue. "I believe," said he, "that I have lived the time which nature at my birth allotted me; nor do I die dissatisfied, leaving you, my sons, not only affluent and in health, but in such condition also that if you be willing to follow the example which I have left for you, you must enjoy in Florence the general respect and the esteem of all. That which gives, however, most consolation to this hour of death, is, that no remorse for injuries inflicted on my fellows mingles with my last thoughts, but rather the recollection of having shewn, to the extent of my power, kindness and favours to every one. In this I do most earnestly beseech you to do as I have done. Of the honours of the state, I advise you to accept but

those which your fellow-citizens may offer you, and which the law allows. That authority which man usurps it is, and not that which the favour of his fellows bestows on him, that makes him subject to hate. This has been my course ; a course that has not only preserved me among the discords in which I have taken a part, but that has spread my reputation and extended my influence in the state."

The character of Cosimo was fitted to turn this counsel to the fullest effect. He was aware of the advance which had been silently making during the lifetime of his father towards the toleration first, and afterwards the admiration, of individual sovereignty. He fully comprehended, too, how far the love of the old institutions still prevailed ; and by a due appreciation of the changing character of the times, he adjusted to its exigencies the course of his conduct, and adapted to the opportunities which it afforded the designs and extent of his ambition. The funeral of Giovanni was a mark of affection to his memory, but it was also a tribute to the influence which survived in his name to his children. Cosimo, indeed, appeared on the death of his father to absorb the whole of the vast authority which belonged to the name of the Medici ; and the eras of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Leo X. declare to what account that authority had been turned in its descent from father to son, even to the fourth generation ; but when, for a moment, it had seemed to decline, and the failure of the line of Cosimo had seemed to free the subject city from the pernicious controul of the Medicean influence, a fouler tyranny arose in the line of his brother, and placed over the extinct and annihilated republic a sovereign in the person of another Cosimo, the first grand duke of Tuscany.

In the meanwhile the hopes of the administration-party revived with the decease of their most formidable adversary. They could not escape the scrutiny of the Catasto, but they endeavoured to lighten the weight

of its burthen by extending its operation over the greatest number which it might be possible to subject to its provisions. The cities, particularly, which had been subdued or had yielded to the Florentine rule, were made a means of relieving the discontented aristocracy. The Volterrans rebelled, and all the country in allegiance like them to the city protested against the oppression. Volterra was reduced ; but new causes of discontent, or at least new party feelings, were created or former ones revived and exacerbated by the contested principle.

Still more unfortunately for the government, another foreign war was also preparing for them in the factions of a neighbouring city. Lucca, on the recovery of her liberty, had become divided by the rivals for dominion in her government. This division had resulted in the establishment of the Guinigi, whose history, during the period of their ambitious struggle, is indeed a tragedy. For thirty years, on the suppression of the opposite party, Paolo had, however, succeeded, by the aid of the Visconti, in holding and exercising the sovereign power in that city, when the designs of the unprincipled but never vainly fickle prince of Milan appeared to require his ruin. In this moment of trouble, the ancient claims of the Florentines to the possession of Lucca were renewed. Their general, Fortebraccio, who had been dispatched against Volterra on the submission of that city, was secretly commanded to enter the territory of the Lucchese. Ambassadors from that people appeared to remonstrate in Florence ; but those before whom they were to make their complaint, were also those who had encouraged or directed the breach for which the embassy had been sent to demand satisfaction. Even the Medici joined with Albizzi, the great enemy of their house, and aided in the cry of persecution against the devoted city. Uzzano, on the other hand, who had always acted with the administration, of which, indeed, he constituted an important

part, now sided with the opposite party, and would have resisted, if possible, the injustice of his colleagues. On the same side with Uzzano was Nero, the son of Gino Capponi, whom we have already seen as high in the confidence of his countrymen; the conqueror of Pisa and the historian of her fall. Thus it appeared that a new distribution of parties was about to be formed in Florence, already the prey to those which had for so many years distracted her bosom.

Even national vanity, and a hope of adding to their tributary states the important city of Lucca, which had once so strenuously contested with Florence the supremacy in Tuscany, could not be so directed as to make this war of conquest popular with a large body of the Florentines. Some were moved to oppose it by the unworthy motive which appeared through the thin mantle that the majority had wished to cast upon its injustice. Many remembered the disastrous wars which had been waged before with Lucca, when every thing had seemed to promise a surer success; and all were influenced by the fear of new burthens and farther demands upon the fruits of their commercial enterprise or painful industry. The influence, nevertheless, of Albizzi and the Medici prevailed; the *Ten* were created as a war department at home; Fortebraccio was retained in the command of the troops as captain-general, while Astorre Gianni and Albizzi were appointed commissioners of the *Ten* as a medium of intercourse with the captain-general, and, probably, at the same time, as checks imposed upon the military authority by the anxious jealousy of the civil authorities. Very soon the removal of Gianni required a new choice of commissioner to supply his place in the camp; and, as it was deemed expedient to increase the number, Alamanno Salviati and Nero Capponi were associated with Rinaldo Albizzi. The choice of the latter, who had opposed the undertaking of this war, to superintend its conduct, manifests how powerful

must have been the party to which he belonged ; it also shews how far the force of popular opinion still sufficed against the growing authority of the aristocratic usurpation.

At this moment there was in Florence an individual, who, in a nobler path than that in which the Medici and the Albizzi had gained their notoriety, was attracting the wonder and admiration of the citizens. The rude architecture of his times was shamed by the purity and magnificence of his designs ; and while the Florentines believed that they were daily gaining foreign influence by added territory, they were gratified to see the splendour of their palaces and parks conforming to the imagined grandeur of their state. Yet all that they had prized before, beyond this pomp and show—the dignity of liberty, had perished. To the beautiful art of which he may be considered to have been the restorer, and which had carried his reputation to the greatest height, Brunelleschi added an extensive knowledge, for the times, of the still more practically useful science of the engineer. When, therefore, this remarkable and respected individual proclaimed that he would by his art reduce, without the smallest loss of Florentine blood, the city which Florence had determined to subdue, the eyes of all his fellow-citizens were turned on him with the implicit confidence of faith.

The project of this singular man was to turn the waters of the Serchio back upon the city of Lucca, through which it flowed, by damming its course below the city, and directing the neighbouring streams to its channel, above. Albizzi had so calculated upon the feasibility of this undertaking, that the objections of the more cautious Capponi were over-ruled, and the orders of the council were issued for the execution of Brunelleschi's design. Depending on the skill and judgment of one so eminently superior to his contemporaries in the art which he professed, the council had not

even contemplated the possibility of a failure. But Lucca had always been fatal to the projects of Florentine ambition, and the Lucchese had never yielded to the Florentines either in courage or skill. While Brunelleschi laboured, by the construction of mounds and dams, to drive back the waters upon the city, the besieged were as actively employed by counter-works to keep them in their course. This was naturally an easier labour ; and when the leader of the besieging army, under the direction of his engineer, believed that the annihilating flood but waited his command to bury the whole population beneath its impetuous waters, the relentless order was answered by the rush of the furious torrent upon his own camp, and upon the field on which he stood in the vain hope of directing its fury, and on which he had posted his men to fall upon the defenceless city and occupy its desolated halls in the name of its rival. The tidings of the destruction of their army were carried to Florence while the certainty of victory had raised the hopes of the citizens to the most extravagant demonstrations of joy. In a moment the current of public opinion was changed ; the merits of Brunelleschi were forgotten, and all that he had done to spread his country's fame was lost in this disappointment of its hopes.

In the mean while Lucca had been gaining friends. Visconti had dispatched his general, Sforza, to its succour, and Genoa, apprehensive of the ambition of Florence, her great commercial rival, and now, indeed, almost beyond her in the emulation of commercial prosperity, had declared for the persecuted city. But Sforza was not proof against the treacherous weapons with which Florence had armed the conductors of her wars. She had nothing, she had no one to match against him in the field ; but she had treasures which Sforza was not able to resist. He could not deliver the city into their hands, but he lent himself to an unworthy pretext for the deposition of Guinigi, in which the

Florentines, his purchasers, had expected to find an advantage that might lead to the final occupation of the coveted place. Whatever had been their expectations, the result made clear that they had calculated without a due understanding of the posture of affairs, or of the resolute hostility of Lucca. The people of that city, in the expulsion of Guinigi, insisted that they had themselves accomplished all for which Florence had pretended to take up arms against them. They did not, perhaps, expect to change by their representations the purpose of their enemies; but they conceived that they should thus compel them to lay down the mask behind which they had hoped to conceal their designs, and to assume, in the eyes of the neighbouring states, the attitude of offence; they knew that the ambition of Visconti was a security to them, and that they might always have recourse to his alliance in the last resort against the encroachments of Florence. The open assistance of Genoa, and the secret aid of the duke of Milan, soon justified their expectation. By degrees the Florentines, still wishing to confine themselves to a dispute with Lucca alone, discovered that they were again engaging in a burthensome war. Against Fortebraccio and the count of Urbino, who were placed at the head of the Florentine forces, was Piccinino, the former unsuccessful leader of the troops which he was now to oppose. More fortunate in opposition to Florence than he had been when entrusted with the command of her forces, Piccinino had succeeded in surprising her captains before the city which they had undertaken to reduce, and which he had been sent to rescue from their attack. From the walls the Lucchese were spectators of the fight upon which their destinies were placed; and when they beheld the defeat of that army which had so long hovered around their city, the open enemy of its freedom, they poured from the gates, and covered with kisses the hand which seemed to have rescued them from impending destruc-

tion. Fifteen hundred horse were left by the Florentines upon the field; and all the territory which they had formerly reduced in this unjustifiable war, was torn from them on the retreat of their beaten and disheartened armament.

Nor was this the only loss which seemed to threaten the government. Piccinino, not content with defensive measures, now, in his turn, assumed the offensive; and crossing into the Pisan territory, made it doubtful how far the Florentines might now have to contend for the integrity of their state. Pisa had, by the cares of Gino Capponi, been reconciled for a moment to the sight of her conquerors. But soon the natural feelings of a conquered people, a people conquered too by its rival of centuries, returned. In the same proportion the conduct of the Florentine government became more severe towards its subject city. In the hopelessness of relief the Pisans were compelled to submit; but they were unable to endure the sight of their palaces, and all the evidences of their early prosperity and pride, in the possession of those whom they had so often met as equal enemies, and to whom the descending rivalry of generations had rendered hate a national virtue. Emigration immediately commenced; the inheritors of Pisa's old nobility now turned their backs upon the walls whose circuit made them slaves; and bearing with them all that they could convert of their possessions into gold, they day by day abandoned the city, leaving, as each one passed the limits of her ancient territory, a blank which no care of the Florentines could supply. The latter endeavoured by colonization to build up the fallen fortunes of the disconsolate city. But they could have no intention, in despatching a part of their own population to Pisa, to raise her up again as a rival to their own proud country; and even when the emigration from Florence almost equalled that which was daily taking place from the conquered Pisa, the new comers were scarcely heard

within her walls ; their presence was scarcely perceived, and the silent city began already to assume the character of sullen and reproachful solitude, which still frowns from her palaces and towers upon the traveller, and still appears to mourn the loss of her freedom. With every departing son she lost a portion of her wealth ; but she lost also what was greater still, and what had collected her wealth and made her port the great Italian mart,—the enterprize and spirit of her population.*

The incursions of Piccinino into the territory which had formerly belonged to Pisa now awakened all the fears of its conquerors. These fears were multiplied by a consciousness of the severity with which the Pisans had been treated by the administration of Florence ; and it was not too much to apprehend, that the appearance of a hostile army before their gates might be welcomed by them as that of a liberating restorer. New councils were held upon this subject by the terrified Florentines, and new rigour seemed alone to promise security against the effects of the old. A singular silence prevails upon this subject among the contemporary writers of most authority, in relation to the measures adopted for the preservation of their conquest. That they exceeded in severity all with which the unhappy Pisans had been afflicted before, is universally allowed ; but we are fortunately permitted, by the obscurity which covers the transaction, to question the authenticity of that amount which represents as so gratuitously cruel the aristocracy that presided over the fate of Florence and her tributaries. That those who seemed most likely to excite revolt against their government in Pisa should have been secured by ba-

* "The most ancient and opulent families removed to Lucca, Sardinia, and Sicily. The young men almost all engaged in the companies of adventure, to find in the camp an independence which they could no longer hope for in their own country : and Pisa, in losing its liberty, lost its commerce, population, and every remnant of prosperity."—*Sismondi*.

nishment, or even death, is not improbable ; yet the proscription of all the males of Pisa who had passed the age of fifteen years, and had not reached the sixtieth, appears a cruelty almost incredible, when we reflect that Florence had not yet been sufficiently subdued to the abandonment of her republican virtues, nor long enough accustomed to the principles by which she was henceforward to be governed, to endure with patience such a reckless exercise of arbitrary power. Sienna and Piombino allied themselves to the enemies of the ambitious city, which now seemed to own no other principle in its prosecution of hostilities than those which had made the Lombard princes a common enemy to the free states of Italy. Piccinino, in the meanwhile, traversed the territory of Florence, here subduing her adherents, and raising there domestic enemies in the revolt of a subject people or place. The duke of Milan had entered into the contest once again, with all his old ambition fortified by the successes of his general in Tuscany. No sooner, however, did this suspected influence appear in open array upon the side of the Lucchese, than all the motives which had called for interference on the part of Venice seemed to demand it now no less imperatively. The long victorious Carmagnola was dispatched again with the soldiers of the senate into the dominions of Visconti, and Piccinino was recalled from the relief of Lucca to confront the legions of this so long fortunate captain. With Piccinino was united in command Francesco Sforza, who now each day performed before the eyes of his countrymen the most dazzling exploits, and nourished, though unknown to them, a high reaching ambition.

Opposed to Sforza and his colleague, the fortune of Carmagnola deserted him at last. In a first engagement he was worsted with a loss of five thousand horse ; but a severer defeat upon the Po, by which the fleet of the Venetians fell into the hands of the enemy, with upwards of eight thousand prisoners, destroyed

the glory of his former achievements, and marked him for the vengeance of the relentless senate which he served, but which acknowledged in its servants no virtue but success, and made no distinction in its sentence between misfortune and crime. The count of Carmagnola paid, therefore, with his life, his misconduct or mishap in the management of his last campaign.

At Florence the tidings of the disastrous results of the northern campaign were atoned for in part by the defeat of the enemy at sea. The combined fleets of the Florentines and Venetians had been victorious against the Genoese, and the war against Florence was carried on without energy in Tuscany. The execution of Carmagnola did not, however, give success to the arms of the Venetians. Another victory, obtained over them by Piccinino in the Valteline, compelled them to sue for peace, or, at least, to manifest a willingness for a termination of hostilities. Florence, without aid, could not for a moment have sustained their pressure; and a peace was concluded again which left the *statu quo* before the commencement of the war unchanged, but opened the eyes of the Florentines to the inexpediency of the contest in which they had been engaged, but the injustice of which they had not cared to resist.

On the death of Martin, which had occurred about two years before, the chair of St. Peter had passed into the possession of a prelate more inclined than he had been to favour the cause of the Florentines. But, on the other hand, to the influence of Visconti was added all the weight of the imperial name. Sigismund, the emperor, had been permitted by him to receive the iron crown of Italy in the city of Milan, whence he had proceeded to Lucca to strengthen the resistance which was still required against the efforts of the Florentines. Arrived at that city, he issued his commands to the beleaguering army, which in reply laid waste before

his eyes the country over which he had hoped to extend an ample protection in the authority of his name.

The return of peace was not, however, a return of quiet to the administration ; for, with the terror which reviving faction cast among them, the dangers of their foreign wars were scarcely regarded in the comparison. The immediate effect of defeat had threatened only the prosperity of the state, but public discontent in time of peace might prostrate the government which had superseded that of the people. Those, therefore, of its members who enjoyed the fullest influence, and who had identified their fortunes, and perhaps their lives, with its continuance, now turned an anxious eye with the revival of parties upon those who might seem indicated, by their greater popularity, as instruments of the public displeasure. Rinaldo Albizzi, the now acknowledged head of the aristocracy, and therefore of the constituted authority, had not to exercise a very curious scrutiny to see that the inheritor of all the favour which had made Giovanni de' Medici the most dangerous rival of his growing strength, was now the last enemy of its established usurpation. But Nicolo da Uzzano, who had been the prudent moderator of Albizzi's impetuosity in the time of Giovanni, was no more ; and the fierceness of hate with which the proud aristocrat pursued the image or the shadow of opposition, was all directed with uncurbed fury against Cosimo. With the latter, however, were connected by blood and by friendship many of the citizens less popular only than himself. Everardo de' Medici and Puccio Pucci were bound to his interest by ties of the strongest affection. Against this union of power, founded on the public love, Rinaldo determined to try the virtue of official power. This contest in the time of the Ciompi had proved unequal, as Rinaldo could not forget ; but he justly felt that the failure of the government upon that occasion had arisen from the irresistible impulse of the democratical principle, which

was then in the full course of developement. The judgment of this politician could account for the past, but it failed him in the attempt to calculate the future. He knew not that though it may be swayed and led, the powerful engine of opinion yet will operate in the very chains of despotism ; he knew not that the overthrow which it had given to his party before for principle, it might occasion again for the less worthy but scarcely less active motive of favour ; and he resolved to tear from the people that idol which might become their instrument of revenge. To effect his end, Rinaldo was compelled to smother for a short time the rancour of his enmity. It was necessary to gain the majority of the Signory, and especially to have the favour of the Gonfalonier. A creature fit for the purpose, and who was only rendered eligible by Albizzi's generosity, was elected to that once exalted dignity. Dependence, if not gratitude, threw him into the arms of Albizzi.

The Medici were in the meantime informed of the plans which were maturing against their interests. Cosimo presented himself to the Signory, and boldly charged them with the contemplated hostility. Albizzi was not, however, yet prepared ; his party, therefore, disclaimed the slightest intention of nurturing designs to his injury, and proceeded, on the contrary, to place him on a commission or council which had just been formed, to consist of eight citizens chosen equally from the quarters of the city, to aid with its advice the deliberations of the Signory. It may be that Cosimo, relying on the affection of the populace, believed that in this office he might frustrate the intention with which it had been conferred upon him by his enemies ; it is still more probable that the devise of Albizzi succeeded, and that Cosimo was deceived by his appointment as a member of this council into the belief that persecution from his adversaries was to cease.

If this were really the case, he had but a short time

for the indulgence of his pleasing hope. Only eight days after the election of Bernardo Guadagni as Gonfalonier he was cited to attend at the palace. Immediately on his arrival he was seized, and with this violence against his person all the malice of his enemies was made known to his friends. A variety of plans now presented themselves to the adherents of Cosimo, and such were the numbers in which they assembled, as to render not even doubtful the result of any encounter in which they might engage for his liberation. Consideration for his safety, however, prevailed over indignation for his wrongs; and the reflection that the first weapon raised for his rescue might be made to fall upon his head, restrained the anxious hosts who would have ventured every thing but his security to give him liberty. Lorenzo, the brother of Cosimo, and Everardo, his cousin, against whom the same designs had been formed, escaped in time from the city, and bore with them the story of the outrage done to their house. So great had been the influence acquired abroad by the family of the Medici during the life of Giovanni, that it now appeared as though the wrong inflicted on his son became a matter of public concern. Ambassadors from Venice arrived at the city, to remonstrate against his imprisonment and treat for his release. The marquis of Ferrara interested himself still more warmly in his behalf; and individuals, whose piety or learning had made their names respectable, and might be thought to make their mediation of avail, were ceaseless in their instances for his enlargement.

In the meanwhile Cosimo was left in the greatest anxiety as to the intention of those by whom his personal liberty had been thus violated. He could not believe that they required less than his life, because, with his own deep policy, he knew that an outrage like that which he had suffered must be fatal to those by whom it had been committed in the event of the liberation of its victim. For many days he cautious-

ly abstained therefore from food, or satisfied the cravings of his appetite with a single crust. But though Rinaldo had, perhaps, not decided himself on the course which he should pursue in relation to his dreaded rival, he had not the courage to meditate his death ; and, after having placed him in the charge of a faithful keeper, he seemed to wait for an opportunity of dealing with him as occasion might allow. The individual into whose custody he had been given, was not well chosen as the instrument of a tyrannical oppression. He soon discovered that Cosimo, in the fear that the food with which he daily served him might conceal the means of his destruction, refused to eat ; he was wounded at the suspicion which had looked on him as on a common assassin. " You fear," said he, at last, " that the food which I offer you may be drugged for your death ; and, in the fear of being poisoned, you expose yourself to the danger of as certain death by abstinence. I cannot be persuaded that any thing is intended by your enemies to the prejudice of your life, when I behold the crowd of friends that defend your cause in the city, and the number who advocate your interests from abroad. But this I may say to you, that if, indeed, they did contemplate such a crime, they would seek another instrument for its perpetration. I will embrue my hands in the blood of no man, and least of all in that of one who has not injured me, as you have not. Take, then, this food, the support of life, and live for yourself and for your country. But, lest my words should fail to persuade you of my truth, let me divide with you the suspected meal." From this moment the condition of the prisoner became less painful. Malevolti, his keeper, had already made the first advance towards an understanding with his captive ; and it soon appeared that he was inclined to carry still further his friendship for his unfortunate charge. But the dignity of his appeal to Cosimo should render it improbable that he would betray his trust ; and Cossi-

no might have found in the honesty of his keeper an obstacle to his escape, which might, by means of his immense resources in money, have been removed in a person of less tried integrity.

At last, however, Malevolti discovered that he could not be at once a faithful agent of the government and a rigid observer of the common laws of truth and honesty. The practices against the life of his prisoner became more frequent and more dangerous, till he at length was left to choose between the alternative of infidelity to those by whom he had been intrusted with this charge, or a still more heinous violation of the dictates of his own virtue. Through his instrumentality Cosimo was allowed to carry on a secret intercourse with many of those who had acted with Albizzi, but who, having attached themselves to his party from motives of the most vulgar interest, might, by a dexterous appeal to the same consideration, be won to favour Cosimo. Among these was the Gonfalonier, whose aid had been principally required in the measures which had been taken for Cosimo's imprisonment.

In the meanwhile the enemies of the Medici had been greatly in doubt as to the manner in which they ought to follow up the first step that, perhaps without sufficient consideration, they had taken. They had failed in their endeavour to obtain possession of the persons of Lorenzo, the brother of their prisoner, and Everard, his cousin and much more earnest advocate. With these also in their power, it is little less than certain that a public or a secret death would have silenced the pretensions of this dangerous family; but the useless murder of Cosimo startled the timidity of his enemies, who saw that all his influence, with added force, would devolve upon one of these surviving representatives of his fortune and name. It was resolved at least to use such means as the occasion afforded for security in the half measures which they

were compelled to adopt. Lorenzo and Everard, with others of the family and party of the Medici who had fled, were forbidden to return to Florence for a number of years ; the longest term of exile being fixed at ten. In regard to Cosimo, it was more difficult to decide upon the ultimate measures to be taken ; but hopes were entertained, that while held in confinement, and unable to attend to the management of his affairs, he might sustain such losses in his commercial concerns as to reduce him from the high state which his wealth alone enabled him to support. Cosimo and his friends were also well aware of the importance to their success and to the attainment of their end, that the vast resources of the house of the Medici should suffer no material loss ; they knew that by the proper distribution of their capital they were adding to their power over the people ; that the influence of their name must perish in less than a generation if not supported by the inexhaustible stores of their treasures ; and they comprehended the object of the administration, which manifestly looked to the failure of their mercantile speculations as the only safe and certain means of subverting their controul in the state. Large sums were therefore placed at the disposal of Cosimo's friends, and all the demands of his extensive commercial enterprises were immediately answered.

Thus frustrated in their views, the party in power were less adverse to the liberation of Cosimo. They felt the danger of his presence, and, as they did not dare to resolve upon his death, they began to judge that a sentence of exile, while it removed all cause of tumult among the people, who still clamoured for his release, would also, by separating him from his partizans, effect at last the destruction of his hold upon the public love. While the council was deliberating on his fate in the palace, the Gonfalonier had decided it by his separate will. A thousand florins offered for his assistance was too powerful an inducement to one who had formerly ac-

cepted a bribe for his co-operation in measures that were in all probability to affect the life of a fellow-citizen. Induced by the offer of this sum, Bernardo Guadagni consented to participate in the escape and flight of Cosimo, who, on the night of the third of October 1433, a fugitive, and little less than proscribed, was led by the first officer of the republic in secret through the gates which he was so soon to enter again in triumph ; to absorb in his authority the dignity of the magistracy of the republic ; and even to annihilate the lingering spirit of the republican institutions. When the council became aware of the escape of its troublesome captive, not sorry, perhaps, to be compelled at last to some decision, and happy in being thus enabled to deal with him as with a self-convicted traitor, without incurring the odium which would have waited on any violence shown to his person, it proceeded to pass sentence of banishment. The exile to which it condemned him was, however, to have an end. It was therefore necessary so to strengthen the party of the present government, that when, on the expiration of his term of exile, Cosimo should return to his native city, he should find no longer the sympathy and love which had rendered him before a terror to the masters of the state. To effect this necessary end, no want of faith was sufficient to awaken shame or excite the voice of conscience in the members of the administration. The late unpopular war against Lucca had been undertaken, at the instigation of Rinaldo Albizzi, in opposition to his ancient colleague Uzzano, and supported by the influence of the Medici. It had then been expedient to use their popularity for the promotion of a measure on which Albizzi had already resolved. This war had become doubly unpopular from its unfortunate result ; and the public impositions had increased in proportion to the difficulties encountered in the contemplated reduction of the Lucchese. When, at last, it proved that the whole enterprize was to be

abandoned, and that all the expenses which had been incurred for its prosecution were to be productive of no result, the fury of the people was expressed in open expressions of disappointment and rage. The Medici had taken part in this war—now they were held up to the public as its first instigators and advocates ; but it was not also said that Rinaldo Albizzi had gone beyond the most urgent of the Medici in advocating the same. The people, however, would not be deceived ; they knew where they might find the real author of that disastrous undertaking, and the attempt to impose upon them rendered the true culprit more despicable, and not less odious, in their eyes. Unable thus to make the anticipated advantage of the absence of Cosimo, his rival now had leisure to reflect upon the precipitate measures into which he had been hurried by his dislike of Cosimo, and to repent the undertaking of a half-accomplished treachery. He now perceived, or rather he could cause those of his party who had shrunk from the severity of his purpose to perceive, how much less peril waits upon the perfect boldness of a crime achieved, than on the timid weakness of a wrong but half-committed and suspended in the execution, not by honesty but by fear. Their victim had escaped from their hands ; he had escaped with all the bitterness of heart that treachery and outrage can create ; he felt that he had been the object of an unmitigated persecution ; but no sooner had he passed the limits of his enemies' restricted power, than his person was invested with another character. The princes through whose territories he passed, and the people of different states who looked on him as the advocate of their class, were emulous of each other in showing him honour ; and when he arrived at the city of Venice, destined for the place of his exile, the senate of that proud and jealous aristocracy had no hesitation to receive and welcome him as a prince who had come to honour them by his presence. The hope of withdraw-

ing from Florence, their great commercial rival, the most illustrious of her merchant chiefs, and of establishing in Venice the interests of the Medici, had, no doubt, a great part in the motive of these unwonted honours to a simple citizen. But Cosimo had founded hopes, on his return to Florence, which no offers from any foreign government, however flattering, could induce him to forego. He, therefore, on his arrival in Venice, adopted a course of living which could not by any probability excite the fears of the administration at Florence, or weaken the ties of love by which the citizens were bound to him. Without attempting to awaken, by assumed and ostentatious sorrows, the sympathy of those by whom he was surrounded, he retired within his simple abode, and there in quiet dignity applied himself to the cultivation of letters, and, it may be, to the maturing of his designs of greatness and revenge. While Cosimo, in his honourable banishment, was waiting the expiration of the term prescribed for his punishment, intrigue in Florence, and a disastrous confusion in the other states, were preparing to make his return not merely a victory over his enemies, but a triumph over the decaying liberties of his country.

Eugenius, the successor of Martin, was possessed of none of the qualities that were required in the stormy period during which his life was cast to guide the affairs of the ecclesiastical state. A long series of disorders had been brought to a close by the election of his predecessor, and now the prospect of affairs appeared to bode a speedy recurrence of the same discords and their attendant misfortunes. The pope had weakly given his assent to the calling of a new council, forgetful of the troubles which had always arisen from the institution of these only ecclesiastical powers which could rival that of the papacy. No sooner, however, had the fatal permission issued from the Vatican, than the unhappy prelate was made sensible of

his error. The council at once assumed a tone of command which imposed upon the pope the necessity of obedience or an armed opposition. To the open enmity which his imprudence had thus brought upon the church, was added another, which, acting in secret for a time, became almost immediately the most formidable to her temporal interests. Visconti, whose absorbing thirst of dominion allowed no opportunity of fomenting the difficulties of his neighbours, and even of his allies, to pass without avail, had seized upon the difference between the pope and the council for advancing his prospects in the very heart of Italy. Until this moment he had scarcely got beyond the limits of Tuscany, in which the constant opposition of the Florentines had operated for the protection of the south. Now, however, he had seemed to find an opportunity, as it were, of bounding over the former barrier, and of beginning, with all the vigour of freshness, his assault upon central Italy, without the prostration of his strength in the attack upon its outposts and defences. To the power of his arms he joined his usual weapons of intrigue; and when all the forces of Eugenius should have been collected for the support of the sacred prerogatives against an insolent body of schismatics, the deserted bishop found that the insinuating influence of Visconti had left him destitute to the mercy of his enemies. Town after town fell away from the rule of the church. Its general, Fortebraccio, had rebelled; and the generals of the duke of Milan in the service of princes or people whom Visconti had induced to apply for their aid, advanced towards the sacred city. There was no longer time for deliberation; as, indeed, there were no longer means of execution, Eugenius had but time to make his escape to Leghorn upon a Florentine galley, when the rebel Fortebraccio entered his capital, and Piccinino, in the name of the Perugians, seized the most important towns in allegiance to his sovereignty. Florence was now re-

called again from her domestic quarrels to the commencement of hostilities with Milan. The old league with Venice was renewed ; and an army under the command of Tolentino for the Florentines, Gattamelata for the Venetians, and the bishop Vitelleschi for the pope, appeared at Imola to contest the progress of Piccinino. An almost bloodless victory, obtained by this leader over the allied forces near this place, delivered into the hands of Visconti upwards of four thousand prisoners, among whom were Tolentino, and others of the most distinguished captains of the league.

For all their recent wars the government of Florence could find less justification than for this. The defence, indeed, of Italian liberty had made it indispensable ; but the populace had so often been deceived, they had so frequently been hurried into inexpedient wars upon the same pretence, that they now refused to examine the circumstances under which they had been driven into this ; they could not, therefore, distinguish it from the many destructive contests into which personal interests had driven them for individual benefit. The news of this defeat, therefore, was a knell to the administration. It had required before, a strong and confident hand to keep in subjection the friends of the Medici. These now declared that the absence of Cosimo was the great cause of the evil counsels of the government, and of the distress of the citizens. The poor were reminded of his beneficence, and the industrious were pointed to the decay of the city's commerce by the diversion of its channels to Venice.

Albizzi perceived the decline of his party, and rallied all his resolution to meet the emergency. He felt that the secret of his success had been but the conviction of his strength, and he resolved to assume upon occasion all the appearance of unabated power. A letter to Cosimo from one Agnolo Acciajoli, wherein the exile was directed to gain the favour of Neri Capponi as a means of restoration to his country, was in-

tercepted, and fell into the hands of the government. The unfortunate Acciajoli was put to the torture, but the friends of the administration seemed to recoil from this manifestation of its rigour. They feared that it had not the means of sustaining itself in such acts against the popular odium; and, in refraining from lending it the whole support of their approbation, they produced the effect which they had dreaded. As this growing weakness of the dominant party became visible, the friends of the Medici increased. It now became obvious to all that a crisis was at hand, and that the election of the Signory to succeed the actual administration would decide the fate of the contending parties. While the incumbents were discussing the means by which to secure the choice of those who might favour their interests and render permanent their authority, the opposite party were concentrating their opposition. The friends of Albizzi were apprehensive of the effect to be produced by the violent measures to which he would have resorted, and started at the thought of the re-establishment of the long degraded class of the ancient nobility. No such discordance of sentiment prevailed on the other hand; one principle of opposition united all—a deep-rooted hatred, namely, of the ruling aristocracy. It was hardly, therefore, contrary to the expectation of any individual of either side when Nicolo di Cocco, a friend of the Medici, was announced as having been drawn from the *Borsa* as Gonfalonier. One only hope, one only remedy, now remained. To set aside the election of this enemy of their cause, a revolutionary measure was required, but one which had been so frequently resorted to by the different parties as to seem rather a constitutional alternative. The restless and unconquerable spirit of Albizzi saw nothing impracticable in it now, for he forgot that, however a popular leader might resort to this step, it offered nothing of hope to one whose power was not in numbers. He proposed,

nevertheless, that before the assumption of office by the newly-elected officers, the actual incumbents should institute a *Balia*,* with all the powers with which that arbitrary commission was always invested; that this *Balia* should declare the recent drawing of the Signory a nullity; that it should burn the *Borse*, and, after having prepared another set with the names of those alone who were in favour of the government, that it should proceed to draw anew the officers for the succession. Albizzi was again upon this question deserted by his friends. They saw, in what appeared to him so easy of accomplishment, a hundred difficulties, and they hoped where he perceived assured defeat. To doubt, to hesitate, was, at a moment such as this, to yield. The new administration, therefore, was formed, and the new magistracy entered upon the exercise of its functions.

More honest in design than their predecessors had been, the officers of the government, supported also by the public voice, scarce thought it necessary to mask their intentions. Bernardo Guadagni, the late Gonfalonier, was charged by them with the offence of speculation; and the principal leaders of the party with which he had acted, were cited to appear at the palace. Albizzi, Barbadori, and Peruzzi, his friends, had yet a powerful support, and an open and avowed hostility to them was now the only means of putting arms into their hands. The opposite party, consisting of the friends of Cosimo, were such unhappily, through feelings very far removed from those which might on his return have re-produced the republic. They were his friends because his rule had promised ease and exemption from cares; because the administration of his opponents had been burthensome and harsh. They were not likely, therefore, generally to take up arms for their favourite, and make the support of his cause

* See page 84.

no less oppressive than that from which they had hoped to escape in his ascendancy. Nothing, therefore, could have been more ill devised than a show of personal hostility to the degraded party, who might thus obtain a pretext for the doubtful appeal to the award of arms. Albizzi, ever ready for such an encounter, felt as if he had half recovered all that had been lost by this conduct of the Signory. He assembled his friends in crowds, and prepared for the defence of his authority under the mask of the defence of his person. Yet many of his party still hung back, and shrunk from the resort to civil arms.

Convinced of its error, the Signory was now desirous of retracing its steps. It knew that it had represented a powerful party, but a party powerful only in opposition rather than in resistance; and nerveless in attack. Already in authority, and sustained by the people, it had nothing now to gain even by victory; but ruin waited on defeat. The palace gates were therefore ordered to be closed, and messengers were dispatched with assurances of friendship to the heads of the faction which had been so recently the government. According to their instructions they addressed themselves principally to Albizzi, with the declaration that nothing was meditated by the Signory to the prejudice of his interests, and that the recall of Cosimo, so far from being a paramount object with the administration, had not even been contemplated by its members. Albizzi, however, had been too long acquainted with the corruptions of office to rely upon any official assurance; he saw, moreover, in the resort of the government to prevarication, the acknowledgment of its weakness; he felt the strength of his own party, and he was solicitous to try the issue of battle, in which he knew at least that nothing could be lost, as every thing had been already torn from them. The chance of this contest only remained, and the probability appeared to be altogether in favour of a result propitious to their

cause. His friends and former colleagues had lost, however, all the courage with which they had oppressed their fellow-citizens in losing the protection of office. In proportion as they had once been insolent, were they despondent now. All that had seemed daring in their characters before, was now explained in their fall; the opinion of their boldness had made them bold; but the natural cowardice returned when the current opinion appeared to have changed, and to have left them in the perilous bark which they had undertaken to navigate without the stream required to support and float its bulk. Which of the tyrants of antiquity, or which of those who held and hold in chains the trampled people of three quarters of the world, had other strength than this? and who shall say, that borrowed strength like this may never nerve a favoured servant to forget his office here, and in the influence of a people's love, impel him to forget a people's rights?

While the friends of Albizzi were irresolute, the pope, a refugee at this moment in Florence, united in the general solicitations to that leader that he would consent to re-establish the harmony of the city by abandoning the arms which he had assumed. The authority of the holy mediator appeared to prevail; but those who knew Albizzi, understood that more the coldness of his friends had wrought than all the intercessions of the pope, to make him cast away this last reliance of his desperate fortunes. There was nothing now left for the party, which, after having waged a reckless and unhallowed war against the principles of public liberty, had proved thus miserably untrue to itself, but to attend the moment of its condemnation. New troops had meanwhile been introduced by the Signory to awe the malcontents, but these were hardly requisite; the populace assembled at their call, and a Balia, created on the spur of the moment, was suffered unmolested to promulgate its decrees of vengeance against the prostrate enemies of

the government. Eugenius had suffered himself to become an instrument in the hands of the Signory for the purpose of destroying the still dreaded Albizzi ; and the breach of faith appearing to involve his character, was greatly reprehended by that honest but ill-judging prelate. Finding it impossible to move the purpose of the now established masters of the state, he directed himself to Albizzi in the hope of excusing himself at least to the victim of his credulity, and of exonerating himself from the suspicion of a participation in the treachery. The humbled prelate met with a still less gratifying reception on this side. Albizzi rudely answered him, that he exonerated him indeed from any charge of a combination with the Signory ; that he took the fault and censure on himself for having weakly permitted himself to believe that he who had been driven from his own dignity, and whose imbecility had lost a throne, could by his influence sustain the cause and fortunes of another in the contest of rivals for supreme controul. He forgot, in the mortification of the moment, the character which he had borne, and because he was at last unfortunate, he fancied himself a martyr. When the decree of banishment was put into his hands, he felt that he was about to fall the victim of an enemy's persecution rather than as an offering to the violated laws and justice of his country ; and he poured forth denunciations of evil against that people with whom the law's supremacy was made to bend to personal hate or individual ambition.

Upon the banishment of Albizzi there remained no longer an obstacle to the recall of Cosimo ; the sentence of his banishment was revoked, and Florence, with a universal shout, demanded the return of her favourite son ; all her gates were open to receive the crowd of joyous attendants, which made his progress a triumph ; and when he passed the walls from which he had escaped a fugitive ; when, again, he placed his

foot upon the soil of his nativity with thoughts of vengeance brooding in his heart, and the high throb of ambition swelling his bosom ; when, as he passed, he marked on either hand the destined victim of either passion, and designated in his mind the future exile or the future slave ; the blinded citizens beheld in him the persecuted champion of those rights that yet remained to them, the guardian of their persons and property amid the wreck of their freedom, and hailed as *father of his country*, the first oppressor who had made their bondage sure ; the first who might leave as a legacy to his posterity, in the catalogue of his possessions, the conquered liberty of the Florentine people. Albizzi, on withdrawing from the city, had early given up all hope of ever entering it again, unless, indeed, by the clemency of his successful rival. Ambition offered now no promise of employment to his restless spirit ; the ardour which had found, in the excitement of political contests, a genial and a necessary exercise, diverted now, with all its energy, into another channel, assumed the appearance of devotion, and rendered the latter days of Albizzi as remarkable for the fervour of his piety as the preceding years of his career had been illustrious or notorious for his relentless inflexibility of political purpose. He made a journey to the Holy Land ; and on his return retired to Ancona, at which place he died in the performance of the offices of his new profession ; but it may not be to judge too curiously if we suppose, that sometimes, in the devotions of the pilgrim and the meditations of the christian sage, the thought of former times and former hopes returned ; and that the spectacle of Florence fallen from her freedom, and enslaved by one for whom he had become a proscript and a wanderer, may have tended to reconcile him to his changed estate, and mingled something of the human pleasures of revenge with the holier joys to which he had devoted the evening of his days.

In the month of October of the year 1434, the return of Cosimo to Florence began the uninterrupted successes of his family ; successes which resulted in the brilliant prosperity of the last of his line, and gave to the Tuscan capital the lustre of Athens, and to Rome a second time the splendour of an Augustan age ; successes too, which left, after a moment of light, the darkness and the desolation of ruin—the sway of Pericles was early succeeded by the rule of the thirty tyrants ; the delusive greatness of Augustus was followed by the degrading tyranny of Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero ; and the pride of Florence, under her magnificent chief, gave place to the servility of a nation of slaves, under the tyrants that perpetuated his name.

In all the blemishes of the Medicean character, from the first appearance of that family in Florence to this fatal moment of its victory over the republican institutions of the nation, the stain of cruelty is wanting to constitute the perfection of tyranny. But the absence of this very trait, which might seem to claim for Cosimo peculiar admiration, lays him open to the deeper charge of a premeditating ambition, that looked to the establishment of a despotism for the free institutions of his country, and that should have qualified the praises which have been heaped upon his moderation, his prudence, and his benevolence. The severity, therefore, of the punishment with which, on his return from banishment, he made his former enemies atone for their enmity, cannot be set down to the account of vulgar anger ; it was the politic revenge of ambition, not the warm and impetuous revenge of hate. Exile and imprisonment, which had been oppression when declared against the friends of the Medici, were now but justice when pronounced against their enemies ; the most distant relationship of blood or the connexion of friendship was enough to call the fury of the dominant party on the head of an indivi-

dual who had no other crime, and who, indeed, was not otherwise obnoxious to its suspicions. A hundred heads of families were banished from the city, together with all their dependents and numerous adherents; and if, observes the great historian of Florence, this proscription had been accompanied by blood, it would have given back the resemblance of that which marked the triumphs of Sylla, or of that which prepared the way for the Augustan purple. Neither, indeed, was it entirely unstained by the atrocities of those inhuman sacrifices. The Venetian republic, however, spared to Florence the actual shedding of the blood of its citizens, and, never sparing of human life, now thought to purchase the friendship of Cosimo by the perpetration of a crime which he might shrink from committing, but the benefit of which he could not fail to reap, and would not, possibly, forget, in his public intercourse with the government which had taken off his enemies and spared him even the little odium that might wait upon their deaths. Antonio, the son of the former Gonfalonier, Bernardo Guadagni, Cosimo Barbadori, and two others of the recent exiles, passing the bounds which had been assigned to them on their banishment, had entered the Venetian territory. By sentence of the authorities of Venice they were ordered to execution, and the magistracy of a great and powerful people thus assumed the character and office of the humblest ministers of the Signory of Florence. This vindication of the authority of the Medicean party, by a foreign government so greatly respected, added new vigour to its operations. It seemed to be, indeed, a recognition of the sovereignty of the aspiring citizen who had called that party to life and dignified it with his name.

For many generations we have seen the Medici among the foremost of the popular magistrates; public favour had placed them always in the highest posts, and seemed to promise them perpetual rule. But the favour of the public might vary, and, what was still to

be more apprehended, there might come a time when public favour and the public voice should fail to sustain an individual who had no other strength. Every thing appeared to indicate that such would be the case ; for now, even now, while all the institutions of the democracy survived—the republican officers ; the election by lot, and the frequency of change in the magistracy, the power of Albizzi had been sufficient to resist and contravene the public will. To provide, therefore, against all future harm, it was resolved at once to make that change in the government which the change in the character of the people and the state of the country appeared to invite. It was not to be disguised that the old institutions were no longer adapted to the times. The Medici might not have chosen to turn this condition of affairs to their advantage ; but their forbearance would not have saved the city now destined to slavery. They were not, however, of a race to hesitate when fortune appeared to have placed the bridle of power in their hands ; after years of crafty policy, directed through generations to the acquisition of political advancement, they were not to be restrained when the object of their long protracted hopes was placed within their grasp. Cosimo seized, therefore, with avidity, the occasion of this temporary overflow of love and gratitude, to fix a power that afterwards no change might shake ; to fix upon the people a rule which could not be removed but by resort to force ; to take all constitutional remedy for oppression out of their reach ; and to leave them, now that they had shewn themselves devoid of all the spirit required for revolution, to revolutionary measures alone as an escape from tyranny. By management in the preparation of the *Borse* that contained the name of the candidates for office, a dominant faction had generally been enabled to return such officers as might correspond to their views and their designs. Yet this could only be done by deceiving the people,

in dealing falsely in the preparation of the *Borse* ; the public were flattered at least by the belief that their ancient liberties were preserved in the chance which might exalt them to office ; a chance which they might have believed was shared by them in common with those who were in wealth and influence greatly above them. Yet this acknowledged right of the people, thus confirmed by every repetition of the form of election, might, in a moment of popular excitement, be vindicated by those who seemed most careless of their privilege, and chance might rescue the government from the hands of those who had so long been accustomed to its exercise, as to conceive at last a prescriptive right to the offices of power and trust. In this manner, indeed, the fall of Albizzi's party had been accomplished, and the election of Cocco had been brought about by such a temporary impulse, joined to such an accident. To prevent a similar incident in the fortunes of the Medici, now little less than absolute in Florence, the principle of election by lot was to be sacrificed. To render it secure that on all future occasions the friends of the government should succeed on every change of the Signory, a law was now proposed, by which every administration should be authorized to appoint its successor. Nothing at this moment could be denied to Cosimo ; and this first blow, openly levelled at political liberty—this first attempt to deprive the people of a participation in the government—this undisguised attempt to subvert the republic, was met with a silent acquiescence or a solicitous and eager assent on the part of those whom it was intended to enslave. The citizens had slept for a moment over their rights ; and when the cry of oppression and of tyranny—when the exclamations of suffering victims roused them from their repose, they looked for the redeeming power of their constitution and their laws ; but in that slumber the desolation of ruin had buried them from the world. Cosimo, now invested with the

arbitrary rule of a despot, for a short time indulged in the temptations of power ; but his disposition was averse to cruelty, and Florence escaped, in falling thus into the hands of her tyrant, the sufferings which usually attend the establishment of a despotism over a people accustomed to be free.

One thing only now remained to give stability to the rule which the people had placed in the hands of the Medici ; exemption, namely, from the necessity of exciting new affections, both of love and hate, in the populace by the imposition of further burthens, and the exactions rendered necessary in a state of war. A peace was therefore concluded between Venice, Florence, and Milan ; and the first gift of the head of the new government to the citizens, now little else than his subjects, became in their eyes the pledge of that security and ease which they had not been able of themselves to obtain, and for which they considered the advantages of self-government not unprofitably exchanged.

The seeds of new discord, however, were already sown. The queen of Naples, whose debaucheries have been alluded to before as tending to the ruin of the Neapolitan throne, and which had given to the princes of Anjou and Aragon a pretext for disturbing with foreign interests the quiet of Italy, had died, and left by will, the Anjevine, successor to her state. His former rival, however, prepared to contest with him the peaceful possession of his inheritance. At the same moment certain pretensions of Rome were advanced to the disputed succession, and all the elements of war were again in commotion. Visconti, never quiet in the general disturbances, took part with the prince of Anjou for a time, and in a naval battle between the fleet of Alphonso and that of the Genoese, the Spanish claimant to the vacant throne of Naples was made a prisoner. The result of this defeat, which might have been the ruin of his hopes, astonished

all the powers of Italy. Alphonso, more successful in the arts of persuasion than in the use of compulsory measures, contrived to turn the loss of his fleet into a victory; his representations to the duke of Milan of the danger which must result to the states of Lombardy from the establishment of a French interest in the south, sunk deep into the mind of his jealous hearer; and when the prince of Anjou, victorious through his ally, had thought to take his seat upon the conquered throne, Visconti declared that the welfare of Italy was opposed to such an extension of Gallic influence in the peninsula, that he had placed Alphonso at liberty, and that he would henceforward sustain the pretensions of Aragon to the disputed crown. This measure had been adopted by the duke without the concurrence of Genoa; nay, the consent of the Genoese, who had been the conquerors of Alphonso, and who had transferred him as their prisoner to their acknowledged lord, had not even been demanded. But, though in the allegiance of the ducal crown of Milan, the people of Genoa were not its conquered slaves. They therefore warmly resented this neglect of their rights and of their services by Visconti, whose only power in Genoa depended on the acquiescence of the nobles in his rule. Under the irritation of this measure, in which it seemed that all the interests of their state had been sacrificed to those of their conquered enemy, they erected the standard of their old constitution; and calling on the citizens in the name of their former liberty to stand by that ensign, they succeeded, with a facility which astonished themselves, in expelling the governor who represented the Milanese authority in their city. Florence and Venice had but recently concluded treaties of peace with the duke. There had been, however, nothing of amity in their reconciliation. The extensive power of Visconti had still directed their hopes to some sudden turn in his fortune, on which they might cast the weight of their alliance into the opposite scale

to put a limit by force to the ambition which seemed to have no limit in honour and justice. No sooner, therefore, did such an incident occur in the defection of Genoa, than they with eager and a scarcely concealed delight proceeded to offer her aid for the protection of her re-asserted liberty. Rinaldo Albizzi, who had not yet abandoned every hope of returning to his country, and had not, therefore, embraced the new life of piety, was at this moment at the court of Milan. All his hopes revived with the circumstance that now seemed to threaten new disasters to his countrymen. He openly denounced their want of faith to Visconti; and while he affected to believe that the wrong of the Florentine alliance with Genoa had entitled the Milanese tyrant to attempt the subjugation of Florence, he fed the longings of his revenge against that city which had just thrown itself into the arms of his enemy. In this Albizzi might have justified himself in part by the reflection that Florence had already abandoned her liberty, and that he was no longer exciting an enemy against her, but that he was rather revenging her cause by bringing a new foe against her oppressors.

The troops of Visconti under Piccinino now entered Tuscany, subduing place after place till they sat down before Barga. Here he was attacked in the rear by Sforza, and constrained to yield all that he had gained during the whole campaign; for, not content with driving him from the field, the Florentines under Sforza pursued their victory in all the places in which the ensigns of Visconti had been set up by his general, and reduced them all to their former condition. At the same time the Venetians, urged by similar inducements as those which had operated with their allies in Tuscany, assumed the offensive with the duke of Milan, and compelled him to recall, for the defence of his Lombard states, the forces on which he had relied for the acquisition of new territory in Tuscany. In the

danger from which the Florentines, or rather we must henceforward say, the masters of the Florentines, had just been so unexpectedly delivered, their long rivals of Lucca had given countenance, if not assistance, to the arms of Visconti. A pretext was enough to rouse and excite the cupidity of the administration ; and all its old designs were now revived against the obstinate enemies of its ambitious vanity. Again, however, the near and promising prospect of reducing the Lucchese was destined to disappoint the hopes which had so often calculated upon their fall. Lucca still held out, and saw the game of skirmishes and treaties, threats and promises, which had been playing so long between the governments of Venice and Florence upon one side and the despotism of Milan on the other, now again renewed to the preservation of her independence.

There is nothing more remarkable in this portion of the history of Italy than the influence of the soldiers of fortune who figured at the head of the armies of her republics and princes. The forces of the duke of Milan were led by Piccinino, whose name, illustrious as that of the unmatched tyrant for whom he fought, began with himself ; Carmagnola had been a soldier from the ranks, and Sforza, whose fortune made him greater than the rest, had inherited nothing but the reputation of his father, an adventurer himself in the field of ambition. Yet, when the duke of Milan had no excuse for interrupting the peace of the church, and that interruption appeared important to his views, not daring to provoke another league by violation of his treaty with the pope, he addressed himself to Piccinino, and believed that he had raised up an enemy sufficiently powerful against the strength of Rome and of her allies, when he had persuaded that mercenary to declare himself her foe. All Romagna trembled at his arms, and by far the greatest part surrendered at their approach ; yet Piccinino had not even a fortress, to the government of which he could pretend in his own

right, and the extent of territory which he could call his own was that on which his soldiers pitched their tents. On the other hand, Visconti, at whose name the senate of Venice and the Signory of Florence were not ashamed to fear, whose projects of ambition kept in arms the whole of Italy from sea to sea, he also was compelled to use the arts which had first made him dreadful to the people and the governments of the peninsula, and which he had discarded only because he felt secure without their mask ; these arts, to which the fear of Venice, of Florence, of Naples, and of Rome, were not now able to drive him, the terror of Francesco Sforza's arms compelled him to, and the hope to gain his aid against those states with which his only argument was force. Sforza was an adventurer, but he looked for more than the reward of the mercenary. No offer of uncounted sums could win him now from the cause to which he had attached himself, and which he had pledged himself to support. Visconti would leave no male heir upon his death, and Sforza already foresaw the contest which must arise on the occurrence of that event for the vast dominions thus left without a master, yet from long habit of servitude prepared to fall into the arms of the first adventurous claimant who might be bold enough to clasp the tempting but dangerous prize. Filippo Maria, if he yielded in courage and military ability to the leader whom he so much feared, yet yielded nothing to him in the unscrupulous cunning which has been dignified by the name of political sagacity. He read the secret of Sforza, yet scarcely discovered, it may be, to himself. With his reputation, his ability, and his unhesitating ambition, no pretender was likely to be more successful than this leader, when the ducal crown, now worn by Visconti, should become by his decease the prize for which the ambitious, the unprincipled, the bold or the vain, were to contend. Among all these Sforza was known, and knew himself to be the

first. The offer, therefore, of the daughter of the duke of Milan, whose inherited claims might strengthen the work of his own hands, proved too strong for the fidelity of Sforza. He had been sent by the Florentines to aid the Venetians, now carrying on the war with Visconti; but the powerful inducement which had been held out to him from the ducal palace had sunk into heart, and Venice was compelled to reject the counsels and aid of him whom she had begged as a means of little less than salvation from her Florentine allies. Florence, not convinced of the treachery of her favourite, was indignant at the conduct of the Venetians; she withdrew, therefore, from all active participation in the contest, and abandoned the government with which it had acted so long, to the dependence upon its own resources in the war with Visconti. Immediately afterwards, the desertion of Sforza to the duke of Milan informed the Florentines that the suspicions of Venice had been just, and left them to regret that they had exposed her unassisted to the hostility of the common enemy. At the same time Visconti, satisfied with having broken the league which had so long existed against him, and which had been the only barrier to the extension of his usurpations, threw off too soon the disguise which he had assumed towards Sforza. He had allowed the wedding-garments to be prepared for his daughter, and Sforza stood thus indicated as the successor of Visconti to the throne, when suddenly he learned that all these preparations were intended to no other end than to make his name a mockery, and to humble the pride that had aspired too high. Breathing all the fury of hate and shame, count Sforza hastened from Lombardy, and offered his services to any state or people that would use them against the tyrant in whose violated faith Sforza forgot his own. Florence and Venice had been reconciled to each other by the advances of the duke; they looked now for a leader to their purpose, and, for-

getful of his desertion, they addressed themselves to Sforza as the person in whose abilities they could confide, and whose strong incentives to revenge was a guarantee for his fidelity.

The view which we have given of Italian policy during the preceding half of a century, should prepare the reader for the degrading changes which are to succeed. The exaltation of the adventurer Sforza to the sovereignty of Milan; the surrender of the republican spirit first, and finally of the republic itself, into the hands of the Florentine brokers, and the loss of liberty in Pisa, Lucca, and Genoa, while they seem to us inevitable consequences of the still deteriorating policy of the Italians, lead us with equal certainty, themselves now also causes of evil in their turn, to the anticipation of the present state of Italy. From this period we must therefore resign for Florence the high pre-eminence which has been claimed for her of representing the republican spirit in Italy,* because that spirit had before this moment ceased to exist; she still, however, serves, as she retained the republican forms, to unfold the modifications by which the institutions were changed in accordance with the character of the people, until they also came to bear the impress of the times, and show that the ennobling fire of liberty had done its part in Italy.

In the meanwhile the outward appearance of affairs was calculated to satisfy, and perhaps to elevate, the giddy Florentines. The council of Basil still fulminated its decrees against Eugenius, but Eugenius had an ally which all the power of the bishops assembled in this spiritual congress could not resist. The danger of all Christendom was to the pope a restoration of contested authority. All the wide empire of the successors of Constantine had fallen away from their rule; the imperial city held within its walls the whole population,

* See page 46.

to which their narrow sway was now confined ; and the trembling inhabitants, who, as province after province had fallen into the hands of a savage enemy, had sought for protection within their circuit, now seemed to hear him knocking at her gates, or to see him preparing the engines of her pre-determined destruction. John Paleologus, the terrified emperor, now turned his anxious eyes for aid to the west ; but before that aid could be expected, if, indeed, the west had been able to furnish it, concessions the most humiliating were to be made ; the long schism between the churches of the west and the east, the Roman and the Greek, were to be composed ; and as assistance was to be implored of Rome, this difference could only be decided by the submission of the eastern heretics.* After a vain at-

* “ After the labour of nine months, and the debates of twenty-five sessions, they attained the advantage and glory of the reunion of the Greeks. Four principal questions had been agitated between the two churches : 1. The use of unleavened bread in the communion of Christ’s body. 2. The nature of purgatory. 3. The supremacy of the pope. And, 4. The single or double procession of the Holy Ghost. The cause of either nation was managed by ten theological champions : the Latins were supported by the inexhaustible eloquence of cardinal Julian : and Mark of Ephesus and Bessarion of Nice were the bold and able leaders of the Greek forces. We may bestow some praise on the progress of human reason, by observing, that the first of these questions was *now* treated as an immaterial rite, which might innocently vary with the fashion of the age and country. With regard to the second, both parties were agreed in the belief of an intermediate state of purgation for the venial sins of the faithful ; and whether their souls were purified by elemental fire was a doubtful point, which in a few years might be conveniently settled on the spot by the disputants. The claims of supremacy appeared of a more weighty and substantial kind ; yet by the orientals the Roman bishop had ever been respected as the first of the five patriarchs : nor did they scruple to admit, that his jurisdiction should be exercised agreeable to the holy canons ; a vague allowance, which might be defined or eluded by occasional convenience. The procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father alone, or from the Father and the Son, was an article of faith which had sunk much deeper into the minds of men ; and in the sessions of Ferrara and Florence, the Latin addition of *filioque* was subdivided into two questions, whether it were legal, and whether it were orthodox. We may be sure, that neither side could be convinced by the arguments of their opponents. Prejudice may be enlightened by reason, and a super-

tempt of the council to fortify itself by the dignity of the imperial person, it was compelled to witness the triumph of Eugenius, who, at Florence, in full assembly, in the presence of the emperor, the patriarch, and the bishops of the east and west, declared that the difference which had separated Constantinople in spiritual affairs from Rome was at an end, and that the Christian church throughout the world was now, forever, one. This long desired, and frequently contemplated, union, effected by the efforts of Eugenius, put an end to the vigorous opposition of the refractory council, and by degrees the general approbation which was manifested by all the churches of Europe in regard to the proceedings at Florence, soon brought about its gradual and almost imperceptible dissolution. The event was scarcely less gratifying to the pride of Florence than useful to the interests of Rome. The ceremony

ficial glance may be rectified by a clear and more perfect view of an object adapted to our faculties. But the bishops and monks had been taught from their infancy to repeat a form of mysterious words; their national and personal honour depended on the repetition of the same sounds; and their narrow minds were hardened and inflamed by the acrimony of a public dispute.

"While they were lost in a cloud of dust and darkness, the pope and emperor were desirous of a seeming union, which could alone accomplish the purposes of their interview; and the obstinacy of public dispute was softened by the arts of private and personal negotiation. In the treaty between the two nations, several forms of consent were proposed, such as might satisfy the Latins without dishonouring the Greeks: and they weighed the scruples of words and syllables, till the theological balance trembled with a slight preponderance in favour of the Vatican. It was agreed, that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father *and* the Son, as from one principle and one substance; that he proceeds *by* the Son, being of the same nature and substance, and that he proceeds from the Father *and* the Son, by one *spiration* and production. It is less difficult to understand the articles of the preliminary treaty; that the pope should defray all the expenses of the Greeks in their return home; that he should annually maintain two galleys and three hundred soldiers for the defence of Constantinople; that all the ships which transported pilgrims to Jerusalem should be obliged to touch at that port; that as often as they were required, the pope should furnish ten galleys for a year, or twenty for six months; and that he should powerfully solicit the princes of Europe, if the emperor had occasion for land-forces."—*Gibbon*.

of the desired union had been performed within her walls; and the protection afforded to the successor of the Roman Cæsars, himself a Roman emperor; the asylum secured to the great spiritual potentate of Christendom, when both the ecclesiastical and the temporal sovereign had been obliged to flee before the forces of the Milanese duke; the concourse of foreigners attracted by the importance of the matters to be discussed in this council, and the dignity of the principal persons in attendance; all combined to make the citizens imagine in their present state a pomp and a dignity beyond the unaffected simplicity of the old republican era. Thus had vanity supplanted pride in the character of the Florentines, and splendour usurped in their admiration the qualities of glory. This event, greatly exaggerated as to its importance, occurred in A. D. 1439.

The leisure which Florence had enjoyed for the entertainment of her illustrious guests, arose, for the most part, from the diversion which had been made in her favour by the Venetians. They had carried the war without the limits of Tuscany; and if the aid of Florence were required in money or in men, it was readily afforded, for the purpose of keeping at a distance from her borders the inconvenience of a nearer war. Piccinino still commanded the troops of the duke, and the armies of the enemy were headed still by his only equal opponent, the count Sforza. Various encounters kept alive their ancient rivalry, and served to render each more zealous in the cause that had been entrusted to his guardianship. If, for an instant, the fortune of Sforza prevailed, and Piccinino was seen a fugitive, the next moment we perceive him achieving a victory sufficient to restore his fame to all its brilliancy. Such were the alternations of fortune in the war of Milan against the allies, which the ambition of its sovereign had kept united, notwithstanding the commercial and

political jealousies which might have seemed to indicate them as natural rivals.

The complicated relations in which these wars involved the states of Italy belong but incidentally to Florence; they served, however, to afford new opportunities for the prosecution of the designs of those who, having witnessed the prostration of the republican spirit, might now contemplate the erection of a power in Tuscany like that of the Visconti in Lombardy, or, in the event of greater successes, like that of the royal house of Calabria in the south. A summary only of the circumstances growing out of these relations becomes necessary in a compendious history like this, and such a summary, deduced from a careful examination of all the sources of information, can be furnished by no one with such accuracy and judgment as by Sismondi, unless to the means which that illustrious writer enjoyed for the investigation of his subject he also add the philosophic mind of that historian. We avail ourselves, moreover, with the less reluctance, of the comprehensive analysis of the author of the *History of the Italian Republics*, in consequence of the corroboration which we expect to derive from his statement of facts, and from his observations of the principles which we have endeavoured to develop in the course of our history, and more especially in the latter pages, which treat of the decline of the republic and the growth of the Medici.

“During the remainder of the reign of Filippo Maria, he was habitually at war with the two republics of Venice and Florence. He was desirous of recovering with the former the Brescian and Bergamasque territory, which he had been forced to cede to the Venetians; and he resumed against the Florentines the project of his ancestors, to extend the dominion of the Viscontis over Tuscany. Francesco Sforza and Bartolomeo Coleoni gave many proofs of their great talents in the service of the two republics. Nicolo Pic-

cinino and his two sons, Francesco and Jacomo, showed not less ability in the service of the duke of Milan. The last named, however, almost always lost ground by his distrust of his own generals, his versatility, his taste for contradictory intrigues, his eagerness to sign peace every year, and to re-commence hostilities a few weeks afterwards. The history of this war is rendered so confused by the secret practices of Filippo Maria, which most commonly seemed in opposition to his own interest, that we do not attempt to fix it in the memory. The duke of Milan, in making peace with the two republics, on the 21st of October, 1441, granted their general, Francesco Sforza, his daughter Bianca in marriage, ceding with her in dower the lordships of Cremona and Pontremoli. It seemed to be his purpose thus definitively to reconcile himself with Sforza : but it was impossible for this prince to remain firm in one resolution, or to preserve his confidence in those whom he had rendered powerful. He soon entered into the most complicated intrigues to deprive his son-in-law of all his lordships. The war was renewed between him and the two republics ; and Sforza was again the general whom the republics put at the head of their combined army. He was still their commander in 1447, when Filippo Maria, pressed by the Venetians, menaced even in the country around Milan, and fearing to lose his sovereignty, implored the aid of his son-in-law, promising him a sincere reconciliation. Francesco Sforza, who had just lost the March of Ancona by the secret practices of the duke of Milan, yet accepted these last offers. He renounced his ancient alliance with the Florentines and Venetians ; and, on the 9th of August, he set forward with his army from Romagna, where he then was, to the succour of his father-in-law. Arrived at Cotignola, the village of his family,—the village in which his father, after having thrown his pickaxe into the branches of an oak, to be decided either by its ominous fall, or by its remaining

fixed, had seized the sword to engage in a company of adventure,—he there learned the death of the duke of Milan, which had taken place at his capital, on the 13th of August, 1447.

“The war of Lombardy was complicated by its connexion with another war, which at the same time ravaged the kingdom of Naples. On the 2d of June, 1442, Alphonso of Aragon took from René of Anjou the city of Naples; from that time peace was re-established in that kingdom, and Alphonso signalized himself by a liberality which gained for him the surname of ‘the Magnanimous.’ No monarch ever showed more zeal in literature, or granted a more constant and more enlightened protection to men of letters. He proved, by many noble actions, that he had profited by the lessons of antiquity which he admired and studied with so much ardour. He established himself amidst a people which he had conquered, but whose hearts he gained; and returned no more either to Sicily or Aragon. He died at Naples, on the 27th of June, 1458.

“Filippo Maria Visconti, at his death, left no legitimate successor. Upon the extinction of the male line of his family, on which the republic of Milan had conferred the seigniorship, the sovereignty legitimately returned to the republic itself, which claimed its restoration. Four illustrious citizens, Antonio Trivulzio, Teodoro Bossi, Giorgio Lampugnani, and Innocenzio Cotta, on the 14th of August, 1447, excited the people to insurrection; and, with their support, reconstituted the Milanese republic. They, at the same time, engaged all the captains of adventure and men-at-arms who had been in the service of the duke of Milan to declare for them. The most illustrious among these were the two brothers Piccinino, sons of Nicolo, who had died on the 15th of October, 1444; the three brothers San Severino, natural children of a princely house at Naples; but, above all, Francesco Sforza,

who, with his brilliant army, entered the service of the republic, upon condition that the republic should confirm the cession of Cremona, which his wife had brought to him in dower, and add to it the seigniories of Brescia and Verona, if Sforza succeeded in taking either or both those towns from the Venetians.

“An excellent opportunity then presented itself of restoring to Italy liberty and independence. In the country most exposed to the invasion of the transalpine nations there were three rich and powerful republics,—Milan, Venice, and Florence,—supported on one side by the warlike republics of Switzerland; on the other, by the more feeble ones of Genoa, Lucca, Sienna, and Bologna. An equitable alliance between them would have sufficed to secure Italy for ever from the barbarians who menaced it on the side of France and Germany. The opulence of these three republics, their numerous population, and the devotion with which the citizens of free states always concur, with their whole power, in the defence of their country, would have been sufficient to render vain every foreign attack. Unhappily, the two men at the head of the republics of Florence and Venice considered only a present and sordid advantage; they had not the elevation of soul to prefer the future liberty of Italy; and they refused to admit the republic of Milan into a confraternity so desirable for the three states.

“Francesco Foscari, who was doge of Venice from 1423 to 1457, had communicated to the republic, of which he was the chief, his own warlike ambition. He had made it achieve the conquest of the Brescian and Bergamasque territory. He judged the opportunity favourable to detach new provinces from the duchy of Milan, or perhaps to subjugate the whole; and he rejected all the advances of the Milanese republic, which ardently desired peace. Cosimo de’ Medici, at Florence, also, so far from having, like the preceding chiefs of that republic, a true love of liberty,

began to aspire to become the prince of a country in which he had risen as head of the democratic party. Cosimo felt no kind of sympathy for the newly forming republic at Milan, which vainly endeavoured to awaken in Italy the ancient enthusiasm for liberty : he was jealous, too, of the republic of Venice, which appeared to him to aspire to the dominion of the whole peninsula. By way of counterpoise, he promised Francesco Sforza his support to mount the throne which had been filled by the duke of Milan.

"Sforza, himself, in the meanwhile, on the 16th of November, 1447, took by assault Placentia, then the second city of Lombardy, and pillaged it with a barbarity from which it never recovered. He also employed himself in exasperating the dissension which began to manifest itself in the Milanese council. In the month of May, 1448, he took from the Venetians all they had conquered on the right of the Adda. On the 17th of July, he burnt their fleet on the Po, near Casal Maggiore ; and, on the 15th of September, he gained a great and last victory over them at Caravaggio, where he made nearly their whole army prisoners of war.

"Sforza, after these victories, thought the Venetians sufficiently subdued to prevent them from attempting to conquer a state which offered such vigorous resistance. He feared likewise that the Milanese might be too much elated to submit to him. He therefore released all the Venetian prisoners taken by him at Caravaggio ; and on the 18th of October, 1448, signed a treaty with the Venetians, on condition that they should aid him in making the conquest of the duchy of Milan, with all the territory attached to it under Filippo Maria. Placentia was the first to yield to Sforza ; Abbiate-Grasso, Varese, Tortona, Alexandria, soon after successively opened their gates to him. Pavia had submitted to him in the preceding year, while he was still in the service of the Milanese. In the

month of February, 1449, he took possession of Parma; in the September following, of Lodi and Crema.

"The republic of Venice perceived at last, but too late, that its own interests, and the independence of Italy, equally demanded of them to save the republic of Milan. On the 27th of September, 1449, they signed a treaty with the Milanese, by which they acknowledged the new republic, and assigned as limits to it the Adda, the Tessin, the Po, and the Swiss Alps: at the same time, they abandoned to Sforza seven of the largest cities of Lombardy, with their fertile provinces. Sforza believed himself too near attaining his object to renounce it: he, however, sent his brother to Venice to declare his acceptance of the treaty; and, in conformity with the orders which he had received, he removed his army from Milan. These events occurred in the sowing season; and he was desirous of inspiring the Milanese with confidence, to finish the sowing of their land, and thus consume the greater part of their grain. As soon as this operation was over, he hastily recalled his army; he stopped the supplies of provisions, which the Milanese sent for in every direction; and he renewed hostilities. The Venetians attempted to succour Milan, but he defeated them on the 28th of December. The famine which he produced soon became extreme: the people, incapable of supporting it, rose on the 25th of February, 1450; and, on the 26th, they opened the gates to Francesco Sforza, proclaiming him duke of Milan."

These occurrences, in which all the Italian cities took a less or greater part, were accompanied by no important changes in the domestic affairs of the Florentines. The events which signalized the now fleeting period of their nominal liberty are as the dark forebodings of long deferred but now impending disasters. All that gives its mournful interest to the history of subjugated Lombardy, is the sad recurrence of enormities committed in the name of sovereign authority; and

now, as the last days of the republic of Florence were numbered ; as she began to fall from the list of the few landmarks of freedom in the history of ignorance and oppression, she likewise commenced the exchange of a political history for a criminal record, and for lessons of political wisdom presented the miserable example of crime ; her high authority as the instructress of nations gives place to the interest which human nature feels in human weakness ; we look to her for suitable material for romance ; but we turn to other nations for a guide to political happiness. Two truths her history, however, deduced to this point, and, compared with that of other nations and with what follows of her own, may have added to philosophy in addition to the many lessons which it affords the true politician ; it may teach the philosopher that the history of a free people, or, at least, of the popular influence, even where there is no liberty, alone affords the materials of political science ; and that all the interesting details of crime and misfortune which belong to the records of despotism, however they may affect the feelings and sympathies of men ; however they may serve

“ To point a moral or adorn a tale ;”

are a blank to the politician, and, as a consequence, that the ends of history are found alone in the annals of freedom ; its origin, its progress and decline ; or, at the most, in tracing amid the blighting weight of tyranny the germ of liberty, which is still retained in the breast of the individual when it has perished in the mass. The reader cannot but have been struck, in the former part of this volume, with the absence of those incidents which give such interest to the history of almost every other country in the dark ages through which it has conducted us. He will, it is hardly less certain, have perceived that the little influence of personal ambition in the councils and conduct of the commonwealth is to account for this remarkable peculia-

nity ; but it will not possibly have occurred to all, that from the days of the Tuscan league, which separated Florence from the Empire, to the period of the recall of Cosimo de' Medici, the history of that city offers not a single instance of violated right in which the government has borne a part, and upon which the laws have not been executed, or against which the sovereign power of the citizens has not been exercised for redress.

During the long contest of Florence with Visconti, and with those whom the craft of that prince excited against her ; in all the discord of the several parties, one individual had stood aloof from every faction, and, labouring only for the public good, had gained a reputation which has been lost to posterity only through the notoriety, miscalled celebrity, that has distinguished the name of one of his contemporaries. Even the influence of Cosimo, in the midst of the splendour of his prosperity or the sympathy with his adversities, could not absorb the feeling of admiration which yet paid tribute to the virtues of Neri Capponi. In all the recent contests, Capponi, either as one of the commissaries or in other offices, had had abundant means of heaping up the means of corruption, and of enriching himself at the expense of his fellow-citizens. Now, indeed, the power which was found in wealth, at once the support of the oppressor and of him who sought to resist the oppression, might seem to offer a justification for even dishonesty in its acquisition ; yet while it was remembered that the commissariat had been given heretofore as an office of profit, the people witnessed the poverty of Capponi as a prodigy, and acknowledged the virtue which they had ceased to exercise. In the height of his power Cosimo dared not to measure his strength with the popularity of Capponi ; and while his bribes, in the specious name of a munificent patriotism, were corrupting the city, he did not dare within its very walls to stake the influence of countless trea-

asures against the unpurchased admiration of Capponi's simple honesty. The less, however, that the courage of Cosimo permitted him to do, the more his fears impelled him to resolve, and he sought a place in which he might attack the outposts of that popularity which outraged his self-love ; not because it was greater than his own, but because it had been more justly acquired. Among the warmest adherents of Capponi was a certain Baldaccio Anghiari. 'This individual, a brave and resolute soldier, had witnessed the greater portion of the battles in which the recent policy of the Florentines had involved them. He had seen the misconduct which had so often caused their discomfiture or rendered even victory of no avail. The Gonfalonier Orlandini had been one of those whose unfitness and incapacity he had formerly exposed. To him the citizen ruler applied himself in the assurance that he should find a willing instrument. According to the observation of Macchiavelli, than whom no writer of Italy was more fully acquainted with the policy of his countrymen and with the hearts of all mankind, the conduct of Cosimo in the choice of Orlandini was actuated not alone by the certainty of obtaining his co-operation. To him it appeared that the assistance of any other person, though as easily obtained would have been rendered in vain. Cosimo could only wound obliquely the popularity of his rival, the "daily beauty of whose life" was a reproach to the self-conviction of his conscience ; he found himself compelled to refrain from the person of his dreaded, but unintentional and almost unconscious enemy. As he could not assail him in his own person, he was compelled to attack him in the person of his friend ; to colour with the appearance of state expediency the death of his victim, while he concealed the nature of the offence for which the punishment was inflicted ; and in this open condemnation of the adherent, to strike by indirection at the character of the principal. The hand of the

Gonfalonier would give to a deed of private hatred and private jealousy the colour of an act of public justice, and Orlandini was wrought upon to lend his office to the commission of the crime. Without trial, and even without accusation, the Gonfalonier fell in public upon this victim of the ambition, jealousy, and cowardice of the Medici ; and having deprived him of life, that the citizens might look upon this murder as the discharge of an official duty, and on the murdered as an offering to the laws rather than as the victim of hate, he ordered those indignities to be offered to the corse which it had been the custom to heap upon the felons whom justice had deprived of life. Such was the foundation of that tyranny which has dared to challenge the admiration of posterity, and which would place among the proudest eras of human glory the age of the Medici.

While in the north the active ambition of Sforza was leading him directly to the disputed succession at Milan, a temporary danger also threatened Florence from a quarter, which, since the death of Ladislaus, had ceased to exercise any preponderating influence in the affairs of the peninsula. Alphonso, who had exchanged his other possessions for the throne of Naples, in the general abandonment of their former principles which marked the state of the Italian cities in his day, might reasonably expect, in the authority of his name and the popularity of his person, to come in for a portion of the spoils of liberty. His projects against the independence of Milan were undisguised ; and as Florence, at the instance of her citizen master, had espoused the cause of Sforza in the same unprincipled pursuit, the seeds of a new war were already sown. But Florence, though false to herself, was yet faithful to her allies ; and as she had for many years opposed the barrier of her resistance to the ambition which contemplated the extension of empire from the Alps to the sea, so now again she stood before the arms of Alphonso, and broke the rising empire of the south. The

victories of Sforza, as we have already seen, resulted in his elevation to the ducal throne of his father-in-law, and changed the posture of affairs in Italy. The long alliance of Florence with her sister republic, was changed for a league, which her master's interests made requisite, with the new despot of the north ; by the aid of Cosimo's immense resources in money and credit, the views of Sforza had been chiefly promoted ; the courage, the tact, and, most of all, the established autocracy, of that adventurer, were now to fortify the disguised pretensions of the less respectable tyrant of Florence. Venice, therefore, was compelled to strengthen herself by a new alliance, and, in conjunction with the throne of Naples, placed herself in an attitude of resistance which a moment might convert into one of hostility against the new enemies of Italian liberty. Naples, however, and Venice, were but inferior protectors of the principles which they had never known. Florence had, indeed, sustained them for the value which she had tried and proved in them ; and with the subversion of the popular influence in that city, with the peals of acclamation that hailed the return of the banished Medici, was rung the knell of freedom in that country which had been the guardian of its infancy and the protector of its weakness ; whose sons had poured their blood like water for its defence till they had seen its strength of riper years opposed to the collected power of despotism, priestly and imperial, till they had beheld her triumphant in this opposition over the hostile principles of despotism supported by numbers, and strengthened by sympathy of a common tyranny throughout Europe.

With the elevation of Sforza to the throne of Milan, the Florentines began to hope for less oppressive times ; the interests of the former city, now identified, as the people were told, with those of Florence, seemed to render peace secure upon that side on which all causes of the war that had engaged the Florentines

had formerly arisen. But if the former hostility which had separated the principal people of Lombardy and Tuscany, had given birth to the oppressions out of which arose the early hopes of the Medici, their union augured now the more certain establishment of the Medicean tyranny. The party of that aspiring faction had accomplished its views in substituting its private interests for the consideration of public expediency, and Piero, the son of Cosimo, was sent to offer the congratulations of the Florentine republic to the conqueror of a people who had vainly endeavoured to raise against him the banner of their early liberty. With this just representative of the state was associated Capponi on the part of the people. So little yet could the Medici believe that they had succeeded in eradicating the ancient spirit of the people ; so improbable appeared the change from the principles of 1375 in less than a century ; that Cosimo himself could not comprehend its extent, and would not have had the temerity to contravene the public will by neglect of that citizen whom the populace honoured for his virtues, and whose virtues, thus confessed, were almost a match for the means of corruption which his rival could controul in the possession of exhaustless wealth and an inherited popularity.

On every side were now in motion the elements of new discords ; Naples, Rome and Romagna, Sienna and Florence, with the minor states of Tuscany ; Genoa, Venice, and Milan, all for various motives and with new alliances, began to put on the harness of war. Old and long-cemented interests gave way ; Florence had changed her position as a guard and an umpire in Italy ; a state which she had enjoyed in consequence of her peculiar institutions, uninfluenced by the ordinary motives of the governments that surrounded her, and interested only to preserve the balance between them. The consequences of this change declare the importance of her former attitude. Now the strug-

gle throughout all the Italian cities became uniform in character and design—the struggle of oppression against municipal freedom, and of tyrants against one another; no where was the conservative power, which had so long existed in Florence; and the confusion, the anarchy, the crime of unhallowed contests for despotic sway mingled the people of the states and the interests of Italy, while the policy of nations gave way to the cabals, the intrigues, and the conspiracies of individuals. The Visconti had long spoken for Milan, and by her voice, for Lombardy; the tyrants of Genoa, of Bologna, of Verona, of Mantua, as one succeeded another in the usurpation of authority, had centered in themselves the will of the Genoese, the Bolognese, the Veronese, and the Mantuans; but Florence had spoken for herself—now the Medici assumed the right to form and to explain her desires, and to represent her sovereignty. The combinations of these temporary potentates for the preservation or extension of their usurped authority, can have no analogy with the principles which govern and actuate the councils of nations in their alliances or their contests; yet they are permitted to appear on the same page of history, and are dignified by the title of national policy.

Such and so confused was the aspect of affairs in Italy, when, by the fall of republicanism in Florence, the last barrier to the advance of the adverse principle was beaten down, and every city in Italy acknowledged a master.*

In the meanwhile the chair of St. Peter had come

* The Venetian aristocracy, though it may form an exception to this remark, could not at any period be cited as an example of republican government. "The people of Venice were deprived, almost as much as those of Milan, of all participation in political power. Their suffrages were never demanded, their voice was never heard; they never thought even of questioning the wisdom of their government. But the senate, far wiser in its administration than the tyrants of Lombardy, never allowed their subjects to bear any other burdens than those imposed by itself; and those were always moderate, always equally distributed, in a spirit of justice."—*Sismondi*.

into possession of Nicholas V. Whatever hopes might have been founded before his accession to the pontifical throne on the character of this prelate, it was very soon after discovered that the pedantic love of ancient learning was not specially calculated to enlarge the mind of its votaries, and that the most determined spirit of oppression is not incompatible with a spirit of learned research. It is, indeed, in its general diffusion alone that learning becomes valuable; nor can it be concealed, that when, from any cause, its possession becomes a monopoly, it is the most powerful engine of tyranny. We know not where to find a more striking illustration of this position than in that portion of the rule of Augustus, in which, having triumphed over all that remained of the republic, he succeeded in substituting for it the Empire. A volume for reflection is contained in the few lines which refer to this subject from the recent English historian of Roman Literature.

“The extensive and judicious patronage of literature was attended with manifold political advantages to the emperor. His poets palliated whatever was odious in his despotism, and his protection of philosophers was regarded by the people as a pledge or declaration, that he was resolved to govern with humanity and justice.

“The pageantry of learning may originally have been but one of those many arts of government which Augustus practised so admirably that he inquired on his death-bed, If he had not well performed his part in the farce of life.”*

Most apposite, after this instance, must be cited the treacherous affectation of the Medici; and the friend of their intrigues could scarcely be expected, when he came to sovereign rule, to cherish any high regard for the rights of the people. A last convulsive throb of liberty was breathed in his dominions, but stifled there,

* Dunlop.

as it had already been at Florence and Milan, it appears to have expired in Italy. We cannot look back upon the few preceding years without the deepest sympathy. Banished at an early period from the cities of Lombardy and the south, and even from a greater part of Tuscany, liberty had found an asylum in Florence; driven at last from this refuge by the ambition of the Medici, she returned to the place of her first home in Italy, and called to those who had vindicated her attributes against the Suabian Frederics; the league of Sforza and the Medici, too strong for the new-risen republic, expelled her from Milan, and built up there a tyranny as hopeless as that which had failed on the death of Visconti—still, as if reluctant to abandon the country to which she had been accustomed so long, she fled from city to city, till at last she staid her parting flight upon the everlasting capital. But Rome had been—the remains of her glory were not even a reproach to her degradation; and the attempt to animate her walls with the spirit of her consular freedom, to call again beneath the wing of her eagle the wide population that had carried its flight beyond the boldest soarings of the mountain's feathered king, was vain as would have been the hope to break the marble that enclosed the dust of her Scipios; to breathe the breath of life into their mouldered remains, to case them in iron, and bid them stand again at the head of her citizen legions. No wonder then that he who would have given to the degenerate days of popish superstition the splendour and the happiness of the days of republican power, should fall a victim to his noble but ill-timed enthusiasm, and leave his name and his cause as a mockery to the enemies of human liberty.*

* The condition of the Roman state, and the history of Porcari, the hero of this last attempt to vindicate its liberty, are thus briefly but interestingly given by Sismondi in his condensed history of the Italian Republics. It may here be observed, that our extracts are made from this epitome rather than from the larger work of the same au-

The zeal of a Christian people had failed to assemble on the shores of Greece a defence against the spreading power of the enemies of the Christian faith—a Moslem band of freebooters, rather than an organ-

thor, in order that, in offering the testimony of so able an authority, we may avail ourselves not merely of his opinions, but even of his words. “Almost at the same time that the last attempt of the Lombards to recover their liberty failed at Milan, the last attempt of a Roman citizen to restore liberty to Rome was punished with death by pope Nicholas V. The liberties of Rome, as well as those of all the states of the church, had been lost, without the possibility of marking the exact moment of their destruction. The senator and caporioni, or bannerets of Rome, had long administered the government of the republic, without having the limits of their authority, and of that of the pope, the first citizen of the state, properly defined. The former, in the oaths taken on entering office, instead of swearing obedience to the pope, promised him protection: they swore not to allow any one to touch his life or limb, or to infringe his liberty. These magistrates, as well as those of the other states of the church, were always elected by the people. The church was regarded as the protector of popular liberty; and, when a city returned under its sovereignty, it always considered that it had recovered freedom. The pope, however, often made the people transfer to him the right of naming the senator of Rome, or the rectors of the other cities of the church. During the long residence of the popes at Avignon, the court of Rome had forgotten its ancient principles of liberty: its legates had assumed absolute power. The anarchy of Rome, the outrages committed by the nobles, the tyranny of several usurpers, had accustomed the people to the loss of liberty.

“Nicholas V., who succeeded Eugenius IV. on the 6th of May, 1447, was known at Florence under the name of Tomaso da Sarzana. He had been preceptor to Rinaldo degli Albizzi, and afterwards the daily guest of Cosimo de’ Medici. His knowledge in ancient literature, in the fine arts, and philosophy, caused him to be ranked among the most distinguished members of the society that assembled at the house of that illustrious citizen. But the studies of Tomaso da Sarzana had not destroyed the servile habits of his mind and education. Grammarians, poets, and rhetoricians were, in this century, too much accustomed to regard themselves as clients or dependants on the rich and great; to live by their bounty, and at their table; to receive from their mouths the word of command for their opinions and sentiments. Stefano Porcari, a Roman noble, willing to profit by the interregnum which preceded the nomination of Nicholas V., to make the Roman citizens demand the renewal and confirmation of their ancient rights and privileges, was denounced to the new pope as a dangerous person; and, so far from obtaining what he had hoped, he had the grief to see the citizens always more strictly excluded from any participation in public affairs. Those were intrusted only to prelates, who, being prepared for it neither by their studies nor sen-

ized military, had succeeded in wresting from the feeble sceptre of the Greek Cæsars the outposts of their narrow empire ; but western Europe had seen no danger in their arrival ; all Thrace had yielded ; Macedonia and Epirus had fallen under the Turkish dominion ; but still the west, engaged in its own wars, gave way to no terror at the name of the Turks—Servia, Bosnia, and Hungary, fell under their controul, or hardly managed to retain a diminished territory and a precarious independence ; but still, the greater nations of Europe leaned with full reliance upon the bulwark which the gallant Poles opposed to their nearer approach, and, heedless of the intentions of the successors of Othman, applied themselves to the consolidation of their governments. Beyond the Alps the principles of des-

timents, suffered the administration to fall into the most shameful disorder.

“ In an insurrection of the people in the Piazza Navona, arising from a quarrel which began at a bull-fight, Stefano Porcari endeavoured to direct their attention to a more noble object, and turn this tumult to the advantage of liberty. The pope hastily indulged all the fancies of the people, with respect to their games or amusements ; but firmly rejected all their serious demands, and exiled Porcari to Bologna. The latter hoped to obtain by conspiracy what he had failed to accomplish by insurrection. There were not less than 400 exiled Roman citizens : he persuaded them all to join him, and appointed them a rendezvous at Rome, for the 5th of January, 1453, in the house of his brother-in-law. Having escaped the vigilance of the legate of Bologna, he proceeded there himself, accompanied by 300 soldiers, whom he had enlisted in his service. The whole band was assembled on the night of the appointed 5th of January ; and Stefano Porcari was haranguing them, to prepare them for the attack of the capitol,—in which he reckoned on re-establishing the senate of the Roman republic,—when, his secret having been betrayed, the house was surrounded with troops, the doors suddenly forced, and the conspirators overcome by numbers before their arms had been distributed. Next morning, the body of Stefano Porcari, with those of nine of his associates, were seen hanging from the battlements of the castle of St. Angelo. In spite of their ardent entreaties, they had been denied confession and the sacrament. Eight days later, the executions, after a mockery of law proceedings, were renewed, and continued in great numbers. The pope succeeded in causing those who had taken refuge in neighbouring states to be delivered up to him ; and thus the last spark of Roman liberty was extinguished in blood.”

potism were in action, and within, the conflict of ages was about to cease in the triumph of aristocracy; states, cities, and people, and even individuals, attentive to the domestic affairs of nearer interest, seemed blind to the danger that threatened from afar. In a moment, however, the cry of a people about to be blotted from the face of the earth burst upon their ears; a narrow sea divided from the shores of Italy the little less than sacred soil of Greece, and the waves of the Egean, as they rolled their tribute to the bosom of the Mediterranean, seemed to bear the warning voice of an expiring race to a people with whose fate, in fable and in history, it had never been unconnected. A difference of opinion, however, had separated the eastern church of Christ from the more prosperous hierarchy of the west; in the consciousness of approaching danger Italy still stopped to question in regard to points of faith; Genoa, Venice, Naples, all in the moment for action began to reflect, to deliberate, and treat; a feeble aid afforded to the Greeks declared the enmity of the Venetians and the Genoese to the cause of the sultan; but a little troop, however resolute, amounting to five hundred men, could not have been intended as an obstacle to the progress of a hundred thousand janisaries conducted by Mahomet, and led by the hope and the promise of plunder. Perhaps, indeed, the princes of Italy did not comprehend the extent of the danger which threatened the emperor of the east: but when at last the news arrived that Constantinople had fallen; that the throne of the Greek emperors had been destroyed; that the long-desired object of Turkish ambition had been accomplished; when one by one the islands and the seas of Greece received the law of the prophet; and the flying crowds that bore the report of Mahomet's savage ferocity, brought the assurance too that his irresistible arms were preparing to unite again in one despotic sway the scattered fragments of the western empire to the now re-united east, a momentary

horror appalled the princes and people of Italy ; they rested not for prudence, not for conviction, but for panic, from their jealousies and their strifes ; they looked with straining eyes to the mountains of Greece, and listened to the parting cry of her last hour, as if that hour were the first of mourning to themselves.

The apathy with which the increasing power of the Mohammedans had been viewed by the Christians of Europe, with the exception of those of Italy, has been justified by the event ; and if we may ascribe to political foresight the calm indifference with which so uncongenial a dominion was permitted to erect itself in the midst of comparative civilization as a check or a moderator, we must not censure the coldness with which a Christian power was permitted by Christians to be blotted from the catalogue of nations, and to be supplanted by a people that professed a hostile faith. But the states of Italy had every thing to lose in a change of dominion in the east. The seas which communicated with the shores of Asia, and gave to the Mediterranean states a navigation hardly less profitable than that which has since been discovered by the stormy cape of Good Hope, were to them the true sources of wealth ; but they were to be still more important when the passage of the straits of Gibraltar and the inland seas should come to be rejected by the Atlantic nations as a means of communication with the richest portions of the east. The maritime states of Venice, Genoa, and Naples, had then a paramount interest in the preservation of the freedom of the basin of the Mediterranean ; they had yet, in fact, the navigation of the Levant, and all the countries of Asia between the Caspian and the Caucasus—Syria, with Egypt and the rest of Africa from Ceuta to the Nile, remained to them. The vast extent of country which constitutes the Russias of Europe and Asia sent its produce too, by the Danube, the Dneister, the Dnieper, and the Don, to the Mediterranean ports ; and Constan-

tinople, in the hands of a friendly power, with the increasing civilization and the agricultural improvements of the north-eastern portions of Europe, might have been a mart for the commerce of the Italian states to be envied by the monopolists of the Indian coasts. The golden chance was suffered, however, to pass; the Dardanelles were blockaded by the castles with which Turkish ambition or jealousy had guarded the entrance to the sea of Marmora; and the commercial republics and monarchies of Italy, shut out from the only waters that their situation enabled them to visit with profit, while the Atlantic countries were extending their commerce to the Indian ocean, and shortly after to the Indies of the west, declined from their greatness, and became as unimportant in the light of commercial rivals to the growing empires beyond the Alps, as they had already come to be contemptible in the light of political enemies, or worthless as political allies. Nor was this the only distant danger which threatened Italy in the fall of the eastern capital; the character of the new population which was to mingle with the Christian inhabitants, and to controul, if not to supplant them in the occupation of the soil, was such as to secure the ruin of all industry and enterprize. Already the grass had withered under the desolating progress of the Mussulmans; and all might have foreseen that the lands over which the crescent was to wave—Bulgaria, Servia, Bosnia, were thenceforward to deny the use and produce of their soil to Europe; that they were to be as a barren to the continent to which they belonged, and which was entitled to look to them for a due proportion of the means of sustenance which her spreading populations should require from the whole surface of her soil. It may be urged that this was an interest common to all the countries of Europe, and that all were bound, as much as the Italian states, to the preservation of the lands which were to contribute to the sustenance of all; but it must

be remembered, that, if it were the common concern of humanity that no portion of the gifts of nature should be ravished from its use, the remoteness of danger to the transalpine countries rendered that danger nothing in comparison with the inevitable destruction with which it seemed to threaten the Mediterranean powers. When the wide breast of the Atlantic, and the scarcely less expansive bosom of the Indian seas, were thrown open to the avarice or enterprize of the former, it should seem as if nature herself had given to the latter the command of a vast inland basin, through which extensive countries, separated from the ocean, might dispense the produce of the fertility of their lands or the fruits of their industry.

But if the certainty of distant danger were not sufficiently manifest to the governments of Italy to induce their efficient cooperation in the defence of the last bulwark of Christianity in the east, we look with wonder on their neglect of interests which seem to have been obviously connected with the preservation of the feeble throne of the Greek emperors. The Venetians and the Genoese possessed the sovereignty of places in the vicinity of Constantinople which were necessary to the consolidation of the Turkish empire; nor could it be supposed that the thirst of territorial aggrandisement, which had impelled the sultans of a narrow dominion in Asia Minor to the subjugation of an empire, and placed at last a barbarian conqueror on the throne of the eastern emperors, would cease to operate while adverse possessions separated the parts of the conquered dominion, and made it in its greatest extent but a government of disjointed fragments.

Galata, conquered from the Genoese, and many of the Grecian islands wrested from the Venetians, consolidated the empire of the Turks in Europe, uniting it at the same time to their dominion in Asia; and taught the states which had expected to see the Turkish sultan satisfied with the conquest of the im-

perial city, that they had thrown away their last defence; and that the assistance with which it would have been easy to sustain the leaguered city, would now be inefficient for the protection of the other places which were destined to participate in her fall. Almost immediately after the establishment of Mahomet in the city of the Constantines, the report prevailed throughout the west that the designs of that conqueror already looked to the subjugation of Naples as a first step towards the conquest of Rome and the extension of Mohammedanism over the capital of Christendom. All Italy was aghast at this rumour; for an instant discord was silenced; the voice of ambition was drowned in that of fear; all eyes were turned to the east; that city, which had seemed too distant to have any interest in common with the cities of catholic Europe, seemed in its blazing ruins now so near as to threaten conflagration to the farthest west.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Commerce and Domestic Industry of the Florentines.

THE republics and kingdoms of the middle ages present a contrast no less striking in the medium of their increase and influence, than in the opposite characters of their political institutions. England, France, Germany, and even Naples, Castile, and Aragon, which constituted the principal monarchies of those ages, offer the spectacle of comparatively widely extended countries subject to the absolute power of her military princes; or to a power circumscribed not by constitutional limits, by opinion, and by laws, but by feudal jealousy and baronial insubordination. At the

call of ambition, or for the protection of his realm, the prince could collect under the banners of his barons the whole effective force of his empire, however wide ; and the lowest vassals of his feudatories, destitute themselves of all political rights, and incapable of conceiving their existence or even their nature, were ready to pour in overwhelming numbers upon the states which were in a continual conflict of principle with the government of the feudal sovereign of their immediate lords. The republics of the same era, each consisting for the most part of a single city, or extending a limited authority over the circumjacent country, unable to cope in numbers with their powerful enemies, soon found themselves compelled to put in force some moral power as a means of resistance and defence. In the contests of nations, wealth and physical strength are the only engines of power ; and as the latter was denied, by the very constitution of their state, to the republics of Italy, they applied themselves with incredible energy to the acquisition of its substitute. The reciprocal action of the political, and civil or moral characters of a people, has already been alluded to ; and in nothing is it more distinctly to be traced than in the prosperity of the free states of Europe during the early ages of her return to civilization. All the commerce of Europe may be said to have been engrossed by these narrow political corporations ; but at the same time, with the increase of their commerce, were developed, in the theory of their government, the principles of civil and political liberty.

The moral source of this commercial prosperity thus assumed as established, it becomes an interesting inquiry, from what combination of circumstances, and from what geographical and political vicissitudes, were drawn the materials for the successful operation of the spirit thus reduced to a principle, or, perhaps, to a necessity ? The progress of geographical knowledge, from the time of the most celebrated geographers of

antiquity to that of the erection of the great commercial republics of the middle era of history, had been small ; and it is more than probable, that when the adventurous prowls of the Venetian gallies first made known to distant countries the name of the virgin republic, they traversed seas and visited regions with guides less certain than those which had led the freighted vessels of the ancient mariners of Rome. In order, therefore, justly to appreciate the effort of the early navigators and merchants of Venice, Pisa, Genoa, or Florence—in order, we should have said, to apprehend the true condition of the commercial relations of the European states with one another and with the East, it becomes necessary to take them up at that moment in which, when the savage triumph of barbarism extinguished the light of knowledge in the West, its principal attendants, industry and commerce, appeared to have been banished from its soil, and to have abandoned its children. We are met, however, at the very outset of this investigation, by a phenomenon that seems to controvert the theories which have passed for incontestible truth. If we seek for the origin of the wealth of nations, it seems almost supererogatory to maintain that its basis is industry ; so inevitable do riches attend upon labour, and so invariably is the absence of industry marked by the presence of poverty and misery. Yet when we turn our eyes to Rome, to that city into which the wealth of all the world was poured as into a reservoir, we find ourselves compelled to allow, that there, at least, not industry but conquest furnished the inexhaustible supply of her revenue. Had Rome, however, divided the empire of the world, even though unequally, with any other city, she must have lost her pre-eminence, or have betaken herself to the ordinary and natural mode of extending her gains. Her wealth was the wealth of the Roman empire, produced by the industry of its provinces. She did not merely seem, but actually was, the great receiver of

the produce of her provinces, lodged in her walls by force of her political relation to the parts of her vast empire : and when that force was shared by her with the capital of the East ; when she became no longer the sole depositary of the provincial wealth, produced by provincial industry ; she diminished in her opulence, she declined in her prosperity, and finally received within her walls the insulting and destroying presence of barbarian conquerors, while her industrious sister, rival, and successor, was still the seat of the Cæsars.

For a long time the luxuries of the East, which had formerly been brought as the tribute of distant provinces to Rome, continued, after Constantinople had usurped the seat of empire, to follow the ancient channels, and to pour themselves into this new lap of luxury. But when the followers of Mahomet, in the first impulse of their religious frenzy, took possession of the eastern parts of the dismembered empire, their hatred of the Christian name cut off all intercourse by the accustomed routes between the western capitals and the rich countries of Asia in the south. The taste for the luxuries of those regions was now, therefore, to be satisfied by the perilous establishment of new routes, and the passage of countries unfrequented and unexplored. All the merchandize that had once descended the Nile, and poured, with the current of that prolific stream, its abundant treasures from Egypt, from Persia and Arabia, from India, and from the borders of China, into the Mediterranean cities, was now by painful labour to mount the current of the Indus, or by other passages to reach the great lake of the Caspian ; thence again to mount the Cyrus ; again to be transported over land to the Phasis ; and thence to find its way through the Euxine to the second Rome upon the Bosphorus. This unnatural route conducted the eastern commerce however of necessity to Constantinople, and made that capital the great dispenser to the cities which had formerly received before they reached her port the richly

freighted vessels that returned into Europe with the riches of Asia.

During the better part of two centuries Europe continued to be supplied with the luxuries which had from long habit become necessities, by this circuitous route. At last the spirit of commerce prevailed over that of fanaticism, and the passage of the Nile, opened again to the Christians, restored in some degree the ancient current of trade. Before the year 850, the Venetians were again familiar with Egypt, and all the ports of the East were soon afterwards open to the enterprize of the Italian navigators. The three great republics, however, of Italy, Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, were not the earliest to distinguish themselves in the rivalship for the dominion of the sea. Amalfi, the name of which has scarcely reached the ears of the unlearned reader, and which to the instructed hearer comes recommended rather by association with the recovery of the long-lost code of Justinian, than for any recollection of its commercial importance, a city of Apulia, bade fair to leave behind it all competition, and to usurp the glories and advantages which were afterwards to be divided by those rivals of industry and power. The arms of this now unimportant place long bore the device of the compass, an instrument which, there invented, has given to commerce the command of oceans that rolled before unploughed by the boldest prows, and inaccessible even to the spirit of adventure or the thirst of gain. The destruction of Amalfi, when the commercial jealousy of Pisa effected her fall, has left us with scanty materials for gathering much information concerning the nature or extent of her commerce; contemporary writers, in celebrating her wealth, her spirit, and her enterprize, have furnished us however with the names at least of the most distant, and at the same time the most important, countries and people with which the citizens of Amalfi

were connected by means of their merchants and their mariners.

“Urbs hæc dives opum, populoque referta videtur,
 Nulla magis locuples argento, vestibus, auro,
 Portibus innumeris, ac plurimus urbe moratur
 Nauta maris, cœlique vias aperire peritus :
 Huc et Alexandri diversa feruntur ab urbe
 Regis et Antiochi : hæc freta plurima transit.
 Hic Arabes, Indi, Siculi noscuntur et Afri :
 Hæc est gens totum prope nobilitata per orbem
 Et mercanda ferens, et amans mercata referre.”
Guglielmo Pugliese, de Normannis.

The era of the crusades supervened at last, and changed the face of European affairs. The fanaticism or the policy of Christian princes carried war and conflagration among the misbelievers of the East ; but the consequences were still more serious to the dominions which they possessed, and over which they exercised the sovereignty at home. It is not our province here to touch upon the deep political effects of these expeditions ; but their influence upon the reviving commerce of the Mediterranean cities cannot be suffered to pass without observation. We have already remarked,* that Italy, however they may have been made by authority of her spiritual capital, took but an inferior part in the military preparations for the recovery of Jerusalem. The ships, nevertheless, of her rising republics, covered the eastern seas, and waiting on the armies assembled on the desert plains of Syria with arms and provisions, they accustomed themselves to the navigation of those waters ; they learned the safest sailings and the most convenient ports ; they became acquainted with the wants and the riches of the Levant ; they made a highway of the most dangerous or least frequented passages ; and laid open to the West a first commercial view of the countries which in its ignorance it had converted from a mine of wealth into a fountain of blood.

* See page 32.

Of the three cities which had now assumed the ascendancy as mercantile communities during the period of the first crusades, Pisa may perhaps be considered as having in some measure outstripped her competitors. Before the bursting of this torrent upon Asia ; before this first return upon the East of the hordes which had in earlier times, and at comparatively frequent intervals, poured from that quarter upon Europe, the Pisans had already established by the Indus, the Oxus, the Caspian, and the Euxine, a chain of communication, of which they held the controul, between the countries of the west and the distant regions of India and China. At the mouth of the Don, a great emporium attested their power and enterprize in the name of the Porto Pisano ; and there the pride of Venice and of Genoa was compelled to acknowledge the superiority of their rival. There the transports and galleys of the three republics met to deposit or receive their precious freights ; and the treasures of Asia seemed there collected for the supply of Europe, which appeared to wait from that storehouse with an anxious eagerness the gifts of a happier climate and a softer sky. This early advantage enabled the Pisans to assume a decided superiority in the conduct of the naval affairs upon which the crusaders mainly depended for support. Each victory, therefore, of the Christian armies, was attended by the extension of some privilege to the traders of Pisa ; and while the people of that city were busy on all the coast of the Levant, at Tyre, at Ptolemais or Acre, in Egypt or in Greece, an influx of foreigners, allured by the certainty of successful speculation, filled her streets, and rendered doubtful by their numbers the native population.

“ Qui pergit Pisas, videt illic monstra marina :
 Hæc urbs Pagonis, Turchis, Libicis quoque Parthis
 Sordida : Chaldei sua lustrant litora tetri.”—*Donizone.*

But what were the means of Pisa for sustaining the burthen of the commercial supremacy which she had

usurped ? As the capital of an extensive country, it is easy to perceive that she would not have been compelled to place a limit to her advancement ; but all the industry of a single city with a few conquered dependencies, applied to commerce, could scarcely be expected to secure it an exclusive direction of the commercial interests of mankind. The produce of even a prolific soil, and the most successful policy for the promotion of manufactures, could under such circumstances avail but for a short time against the spirit of enterprize among a people with inexhaustible resources in the extent of their territorial dominion. The industry of Pisa must therefore have failed in the nature of things, and she must have descended, if she had even retained her liberties, to a very inferior rank among the great commercial nations which have arisen in more modern times. No political provision could have prevented the fulfilment of her destiny, yet it was natural that she should resort to every means to secure the permanency of so valuable a pre-eminence. Amalfi conquered, and the Balearic Isles, with Corsica, reduced to the allegiance of Pisa ; important establishments formed upon the coast of Syria and on the shores of the Black Sea ; every thing appeared to promise a long and uninterrupted dominion of the Mediterranean basin, and therefore of the commercial relations of Europe to the great seaport of Tuscany. But even before the operation of those still greater causes, which must have deprived her of her supremacy, began to manifest itself, a change in her policy hastened her catastrophe. In the earlier crusades, without adventuring much in the quarrel of Christendom against the infidels, the Pisans had, as we have already observed, been prominent among the naval powers in supplying the vast demand of the East for arms and provisions. The fourth crusade, however, seemed to offer less certainty of gain ; the Pisans, therefore, hesitated to participate in its risks, and aban-

doned to their rivals on the Adriatic the opportunity out of which they had formerly extracted so large and enduring a profit. An unexpected result to this expedition secured to the Venetians a greater advantage than they could have anticipated from the most brilliant victories of the crusaders in Palestine. Signed with the cross, in token of brotherhood to all who bore the name of Christian, and pledged to wield the sword against the enemies of the faith of Christ alone, the arms which had been blessed for but this purpose the leaders turned against the Christian emperor of the East ; and their military ardour, which had absorbed religious enthusiasm, was satisfied to hurl the faithless occupant of a Christian throne from his seat, while the revilers of their faith yet trod upon the holy sepulchre. But to Venice nothing more advantageous could have taken place. Her crafty senators, whom neither pride, nor ambition, nor virtue, ever blinded to the hope of gain, beheld the moment for establishing themselves in ports from which to controul the commerce of the world. The Peloponnesus and the islands of the Archipelago fell into their hands ; and if subsequently the occupation of Pera and the Crimea by the Genoese prevented the monopoly contemplated by the Venetians, it at the same time increased the strength of another enemy to Pisa, and prepared her for the fatal blow which a few years afterwards was given no less to her political than to her commercial prosperity in the sea-fight of Meloria. From this moment she ceased to make a prominent figure, or to take a prominent part, among the maritime powers, till, falling into the power of her rival, she transferred to Florence the advantages of her harbour and the little still surviving of her naval strength. Florence, on the other hand, had never mingled much in the quarrels of her neighbours undertaken for the advancement of commercial interests. She had excited, therefore, less jealousy, and had grown rich by the regularity of her

application to the resources which were found within herself and her limited territory. "Her industry," observes the historian of Tuscany,* "though directed to every source of public wealth, was more especially employed in the manufacture of woollens."

Pisa, Genoa, and Venice, had used alternately as a means and as an end the commercial and political systems; in Florence, the latter was based on the former, and the principles of liberty were blended with the labours of the artizan. The practice of a profession or trade was necessary to entitle the citizen to the full enjoyment of his rights. The whole population was therefore divided into arts which, though various, as has been seen at various times, may be stated at twenty-one; or seven, called the *Greater*, and fourteen, the *Minor Arts*. The former were, 1st, *Judges* and *Notaries*; 2nd, *Merchants of French Cloths*; 3rd, *Brokers*; 4th, *Dealers in Woollens* and *Wool*; 5th, *Physicians* and *Apothecaries*; 6th, *Dealers in Silk*; 7th, *Dealers in Furs*. The fourteen *minor arts* were formed from all the inferior trades.

At a very early date the Florentines excelled in the fabric of woollens; and the city, with its hive of indefatigable artizans, soon found itself unable to supply the demand for its produce. The peculiar excellence of their cloths appears to have consisted in their exquisite finish; so that when it was found impossible to produce the fabric from the raw material in sufficient quantities to meet the daily increasing demand, Brabant and England, and all the countries most noted for their manufactures in those early ages, were encouraged to pour their unfinished manufactures into this general market. An immense Italian capital was invested at the same time in those countries in the preparation of these fabrics, which afterwards, distributed to the consumers with the beautiful finish of Florence, brought

* Pignotti.

back with an usurious interest the principal which had been expended abroad. The jealousy of Henry VII. was excited by the streams of wealth that thus seemed to pour in upon the industrious citizens of the busy republic, and the export of woollens in the state required by the Florentine manufacturers was prohibited by that monarch. Until England had set this example, the coin of Florence circulated in every country, not merely in the purchase of the unfinished cloths, but in that of the raw material, of which all Italy furnished an insufficient supply for the single city of Florence. The fine fleeces of Spain and Portugal furnished the material for the finest fabrics; England, France, Majorca, and the cities of Barbary for the cloths of second quality; while the Italian wool was worked up into the inferior manufactures of the most ordinary kind. As early as the year 1284 immense supplies are known to have been brought from England, and in 1491 the monopoly was granted to Florence on the sole condition of her securing to the English in return the exclusive privilege of the transportation.

In the meanwhile the industry of other nations had begun to emulate that of Florence. She had depended altogether, we have seen, upon the produce of distant countries for the material on which her labours were bestowed. These countries now prepared to contend with her in the excellence of their manufactures, and possessing themselves the material which she was compelled to import, they began to render the rivalry a losing struggle on her part. The partial prohibition of Henry VII. was followed by one more absolute in the reign of Elizabeth. The Flemish cities first began to rival Florence in the fineness of her woollens, and England soon entered into the contest. Thus cut off from their supplies, the manufactures, encouraged in Florence as the source of unfailing wealth, began to decline. Agriculture and pasturage had been neglected; and the Florentines, when deprived of the produce of

foreign lands, discovered themselves to be scarcely better than bankrupt in the possession of the most skilful manufacturers and the greatest reputation for her manufactures in the world.

Such was the result of the inordinate protection afforded in Tuscany to a particular interest, amounting to a suppression, if not to a prohibition, of other branches of industry. The enormous accumulation of wealth in the hands of individuals seemed for a while to be an evidence of general prosperity; but in proportion as the manufacturers were protected, the producers were suffered to languish, until at last it became impossible to find the smallest quantity of raw material of the finest quality; and very soon the inferior article, which still continued to be produced, diminished in quantity so as to reduce the manufacturers themselves to bankruptcy.* In a political point of view the consequences were still more disastrous. Encouraged manufactures heaped up wealth in the hands of individuals. They may even, perhaps, have afforded occupation to large bodies of citizens; but they changed them, in a great measure, from freemen into dependents, and bound them to the opinions of those who supplied them with bread. We have already seen that the immense resources of the Medici exalted them, in the absence of any remarkable qualities of mind or heart, above a number of their contemporaries greatly their superiors in worth; and we shall have in a short time to witness their formal, as we have already witnessed their actual, elevation above the civil equality.

In the fifteenth century, the decline of the woollen trade had become so complete, as to cause the manufacturers and capitalists of Florence to abandon it almost entirely. The ruin which this decay of her greatest business would otherwise have brought upon

* While a single fleece of England or Holland would produce eight or nine pounds of the finest wool, in Italy the best sheep would yield but from three to four of the most ordinary.

the city, was, however, averted by the rising importance of the silk manufactures.

The early ages of Rome had scorned, in their virile rudeness, the silken garments that characterized the effeminate Asiatics. Even when the frugal honesty of the Fabrician age had passed, and corruption had begun its encraving work upon the minds of the Romans, the outward dignity remained; and the heart that panted no longer for martial glory, still refused to acknowledge the taint with which it had become affected, and repelled the visible manifestation of its effeminacy. The age of Cæsar, which witnessed the extinction of the Romans, though it appeared for a moment to have extended the glory of Rome, beheld the introduction of those luxuries which, rejected by the pride of freemen, seemed peculiarly proper for the indulgence of a slavish people. At an enormous price, the wares of Persia, India, and China, were transported from the Red Sea, by the way of Myos-Hormos or of Berenice, over the desert of Africa to Koptos on the Nile, whence they were carried to Alexandria to be dispensed among the vain or the dissolute at Rome. With the increase of the demand, imitations began to rival in costliness and beauty the genuine produce of the eastern worm; and the transparent coverings of Coan silk became the badge of those venal beauties, who, in the decay of public morals, were to be found in the highest ranks of Roman society. The art of producing these delicate fabrics was lost to Europe on the overthrow of the Empire, and the occupation of its provinces by the successive hordes of barbarians which subsequently peopled them. Constantinople, preserving much longer the imperial dignity, required the conventional splendours of an imperial court. Immense sums were sent from this city into the Levant for the necessary supplies of the silks of Asia; and speculators were not slow to perceive the incalculable profits which might be realized by the naturalization of the silk-

worm in those countries of the west whose climate would admit of its culture. The Orientals, on the other hand, resolving to keep in their possession this fruitful source of profit, as yet exclusively their own, resorted to every means by which they might prevent the inestimable seed from being carried beyond their borders. At last, however, two hollowed canes were brought to Constantinople filled with the precious deposit of the prolific insect. Constantinople, nevertheless, reaped but little benefit from the pious theft. The climate of Greece proved uncongenial, and when the utmost care succeeded in producing the cocoon, the quantity of silk was found altogether unequal to the care and expense of the production. From the sixth century, in which the culture was first introduced, in the reign of Justinian, to the year 1147, so little profit had been derived from it that the cities of Italy had not yet been induced to acquaint themselves with the art.

In that year, Roger, count of Sicily, among a number of prisoners made by his fleet in a descent upon the islands of the Archipelago, obtained possession of the persons of many individuals skilled in the business of working silk from the deposit of the worm. These prisoners introduced their art into the dominions of their conqueror; and from Palermo it quickly passed into Tuscany and Lombardy. At what precise moment the city of Florence possessed herself of an invention that was to become the great source of her revenue, it is not now possible to determine; but it is known that the silk manufacturers, in the year 1204, already constituted one of the *Seven Arts*, with its consuls, and with all the privileges and immunities of those bodies. Spain had received it at a period considerably earlier; yet very soon, not only Spain, but all the other countries in which it had been introduced, were excelled by the capital of Tuscany in the exquisiteness of their manufactures. As in the case of her woollens, Florence was compelled in a great measure to depend

on foreigners for the raw material in sufficient supplies ; but, more fortunate or more wary in this branch of industry than in the former, she continued to thrive notwithstanding the brilliant success of more powerful states in the same pursuit. In the fifteenth century, after a slow and regular increase, the silk trade in Florence reached the height of its advancement, and this was exactly the era at which she stood forth to the world as the most illustrious example of political greatness and commercial prosperity ; controlling the destinies of Italy by the influence of her republican vigour, and exciting the admiration or envy of the commercial nations of Europe by the accumulation of treasure within her walls.

Upon the silk and woolen manufactures were based the riches of Florence ; but that which constituted her safety on the failure of the latter, prevented also, perhaps, a similar catastrophe to the former. She had neglected almost every thing for the protection of her woolens, yet the newer art of the silk-weavers had not been without some countenance ; and at last the progress which they had made enabled them to occupy the place of which the policy of England and the other countries engaged in the manufactures of woolen goods had deprived the manufacturers of those fabrics in Florence. A more equal distribution of favour now tended to preserve the silk-workers and dealers from a similar fate. We have seen among the seven greater arts the brokers placed in the third place, before some others that have since come to be considered members of more elevated, if not more honourable, professions. These brokers, bound by the strictest regulations to the honest and able discharge of their responsible duties, became the bankers of Europe. The pope transacted through them, while dwelling at Avignon, the fiscal concerns of his estate ; and a single house is known to have had, so early as 1233, its agencies for the speedier transaction of business at Avignon, Bruges,

Brussels, Sienna, Rome, Naples, and Paris. The useful invention of a system of exchange, first known, or at least, perfected, in Florence, thus raised her in commercial character; and, strengthened by the sums of money which, at an advantageous interest, were loaned by the Florentine merchants to the largest houses, and not unfrequently to the governments of other countries, the body or board of Florentine brokers became at once among the most influential in the domestic affairs of the city, and among the most necessary to the rising commerce of Europe. In this view they certainly acquire a new dignity; and if associated, as they should be, with all the blessings that commerce has bestowed upon mankind, must take their place among the benefactors of the human race.

The mode of exacting security on loans is well worthy of attention, inasmuch as it shews with unerring certainty the exact value to commerce of the indefatigable exertions made by the money-lenders of Florence. There is no more certain index to the state of public credit than the nature of the securities given and required. Every reader may draw his conclusions from the following facts. When Aldobrandino d'Este applied for the aid of the bankers of Florence, in addition to the mortgage of all his real estate, they required the person of his brother in pledge. The neglect of similar precautions had caused to Florence a loss that shook the whole fabric of her commercial prosperity, when Edward of England, the conqueror of Cressy and Poitiers, and the ambitious aspirant to the realm and throne of France, permitted the great house of the Peruzzi to fail in consequence of his inability to repay the monies which they had furnished for his wars, and which amounted to a sum, calculated according to the present value of money, of not less than six millions of sequins.

The prosperity of the Florentine brokers was extraordinary indeed; but still, when we comprehend the

extent of their commerce and manufactures, we easily become in a condition to account for it. But a more striking difficulty presents itself in regard to this commerce ; and if we remember the absolute exclusion of the Florentines from the coasts of the Adriatic and the Tuscan seas, we shall be scarcely able to comprehend the means by which they were enabled to carry on the extensive trade that we have seen, with England and the Netherlands for wool, and with the East for all the luxuries which, after the period of the great crusade, became of common necessity in the cities of the West. Without a single port, Florence was perforce without a single vessel ; yet her florin reached the capital of China, and sent thence to the city in which it had been coined, the staples of Pekin. If any thing be required to add to the wonder of Florentine industry and enterprize, we have only to learn that the Venetians, by possessing themselves of all the trade of Egypt to the exclusion of their commercial rivals in Italy, shut out the Florentines from that only direct communication with the East, and closed the door against the influence of their accumulating wealth. While therefore Venice in her galleys, by regular intercourse with the cities of the Nile, might seem to monopolize the Asiatic trade, the enterprize and indefatigable resolution of the Florentines, under all the disadvantages of a circuitous land-carriage, prepared to contest the valuable privilege of furnishing to Europe the luxuries of Asia. In hired vessels belonging to their maritime neighbours, they attended at the mouth of the Don the coming of the caravans which were to supply their freight. These, from Pekin, traversed the great extent of the eastern continent to Astrachan, whence they resumed their journey to the Don, and there, in the vessels prepared for their arrival, deposited the precious burthens which the wealth of Florence had thus caused to pass over such a distance of desert, mountain, and morass, to compete in

its distribution with those who, at less expense and infinitely smaller risk, had received their equally valuable cargoes by the means which nature or art had provided for their transportation; by the current of a navigable stream, or over roads that had for ages been used for similar purposes, and which were both familiar and safe. Even this difficulty, arising from the want of naval force, was not so threatening nor so nearly insuperable as another proceeding from the same immediate cause.

The vast accumulation of wealth, the fruit of their unceasing industry, enabled the merchants of Florence to command the navies of all the maritime powers of Europe. But three jealous commonwealths were in possession of the only ports by which her chartered fleets could return to Florence the equivalent of her outlays. Interest or apparent interest or envy might have induced the people of Genoa, of Pisa, and of Sienna, to close against the citizens of an aspiring rival state the only access by which the returns of her enterprise might reach her as new sources of wealth. It thus became no small or insignificant part of her foreign policy so to array the jealousies of Pisa, Genoa, and Sienna against one another, as to prevent the union of those cities for the annihilation of her commerce, and, as a consequence, of her power if not of her existence. In this, however, she was for the most part successful; nor was it till the occupation of all those states by Visconti, surnamed the count of Virtù, that the Florentines were ever reduced to feel the full assurance of their dependent condition. The death of this tyrant, it may be remembered, in the moment of their last struggle and their last despair, delivered the Florentines from the impending ruin. They recovered from it, indeed, as from the indulgence in a long slumber; and the reduction of Pisa from that moment became the first object of their ambition, not as necessary to their commercial advancement, but as a *sine*

qua non of their political being. With this event, which took place A. D. 1406, Florence saw her commerce now established on a firm foundation; and if she never became powerful among the Italian governments, as a maritime power she secured to herself all the advantage at least of a free and ready access, as well as the certainty of holding in her own hands the controul of her commerce. Had Florence, moreover, put at once afloat a naval armament, it would not have been possible to avoid those doubtful contests for superiority, which might have resulted with her as formerly they had resulted with Pisa in her contests with Genoa. If such prudential considerations subsequently prevailed in the councils of Florence, their first preparations and the organization of their marine appear to indicate a hope, if not an expectation, of establishing a respectable naval force. Yet, though admitted in 1422 to a participation with the Venetians in the commerce of Egypt, and having the freedom of the Black Sea, the long predominance of Venice in Africa, and the complete occupation by the Genoese of the most important ports on the borders of the circumscribed empire of the East, soon undeceived the Florentines as to any hopes which they might have conceived from the acquisition of the Porto Pisano, and soon after of Leghorn. Affairs, therefore, remained with little variation in their aspect till the fall of the Greek throne, which so profoundly shook all the relations of Europe, social, civil, commercial, and political.

Venice and Genoa were in possession of places, the conquest of which by Mahomet or his successors was nothing less than necessary to the integrity of the Turkish empire in Europe. If, then, these cities had not dared with a vigorous aid to unite in the defence of Constantinople, they had given sufficient evidence of a desire so to do. Dislike, therefore, no less than policy, urged the Mohammedan conqueror to an unconcealed hostility towards their people, and an open

attack upon their dependencies that bordered on his dominions. Florence, their natural rival, became under these circumstances almost the natural ally of the sultan; and the establishment of his throne upon the ruins of that of the impotent emperors, which seemed to threaten devastation to the rest of Christendom, was marked by the greatest kindness, and by the immediate concession of important privileges to the Florentines. At this moment, therefore, we must look for their greatest commercial prosperity.

In a work like the present, we have been able naturally to give but a general view of the commerce and domestic industry of the Florentines—an outline not intended to furnish the reader with any detail of the extensive commercial undertakings of the singular people to whom it referred, but to present in one view some of their most striking results. The object of this brief condensation is not, therefore, to furnish a statistical table for the political economist, but rather to show the relation of commerce to great political principles, and to place in parallel regard the advancement of commercial and political prosperity among the Florentines. The introduction of one of the ablest writers of the present day to his admirable sketch of the lives of the Italian Economists, concludes with a set of deductions from the comparison of the progress of the commercial greatness of the Italian states, with the rise and progress of the science of political economy, and of both these with the advancement and decline of political liberty in the same countries.

1st. *Liberty by itself, without the aid of theoretical science, and in spite of the greatest violations of its provisions, is sufficient to sustain and to advance the wealth of nations and the prosperity of states.*

2nd. *The most accurate and acknowledged theories do not alone, in practice, for the absence of liberty; for which, however, they are the only substitute to secure comparative advantages.*

3rd. *Political economy, as a science, is more requisite to the monarchical than to the republican form of government.*

4th. *Liberty is so essential to the prosperity of a people, that this science is itself, in its principles and results, but a circumscribed exercise of freedom extended to commerce.*

5th. *Without either liberty or science, it is impossible for a people to flourish, except under the influence of the momentary excitement of some passing cause ; to relapse, upon its failure, into a sudden and certain decline.*

To investigate, in a measure, the truth of principles so apparently pregnant with important practical results, this chapter has been appended to the six preceding, which constitute the history of the Florentine republic ; and for the same purpose it has been made to precede that portion of the Florentine history in which we are to see the great capital of Tuscany as a dependant city in the controul of a tyrant. Its value, if it contain any, will be derived from a comparison therefore with the preceding and the succeeding chapters ; and this comparison will prove or disprove, so far as they may appear to relate to the question, the justness or the fallacy of the inferences which we have extracted above from the writings of the Italian Economist. In forming our judgment, we must not allow ourselves to forget that republican Tuscany boasted an active, rich, and ambitious population of upwards of three millions of souls ; and that at the termination of the eighteenth century, though subject to the mildest form of tyranny, the whole surface of that beautiful country nourished but a population of one million two hundred thousand—that the whole revenue of the Grand Duke of Tuscany is less than that which filled the people's coffers in the city of republican Florence.

A
HISTORY
OF THE
FLORENTINE REPUBLIC:
AND OF
THE AGE AND RULE
OF
THE MEDICI.

BY
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HISTORY
OF
THE AGE AND RULE
OF
THE MEDICI.

CHAPTER I.

Revolutions in the Form of Government.—Death of Cosimo.—Succession of Piero.—Factions in Florence.—Success of the Medicean Party.—Death of Piero.—Lorenzo and Julian succeed.—Election of Sixtus IV. to the Papacy.—Death of the Duke of Milan.

THE final subversion of the liberties of Florence belongs to an era of prodigies. The empire of the East, which had so long outlived its more illustrious predecessor, and which had seemed to survive amid the decay, and even in the annihilation, of its vital powers, had bowed its head at last ; the pontifical power, too, about to lose its influence over the destinies of distant nations, now began to acquire an unwonted authority within its own territory and through all the states of Italy ; converting its spiritual supremacy into a more firmly established temporal sovereignty ; the long-divided cities of Italy now seemed united in a common cause, or stricken with a common horror ; and a feeling of some strange change about to succeed, or in the very moment of accomplishment, appeared to hold the minds of men in an unusual suspense of wonder, of expectation, and of awe. In Spain the dominion of the

Moors was about to yield its last hold ; and the yearning spirit of the age, unsatisfied at length with the limits in which it had been confined for upwards of four thousand years, was stretching in visionary hope to the distant regions that lay beyond the waters, which were now to shut out but for a short time the war and conflict-worn children of the eastern continent from the freedom that belonged to the wild hills or untrodden savannas of the West.

In the midst of an era teeming with such events, on the very confines of that profound revolution which separated one portion of the world's history from the other, and which, since the great flood, has had but one parallel, dividing the chronicles of the earth and all its kingdoms into the ancient, the middle, and the modern ; at this imposing crisis, the light of freedom was extinguished in Florence. It had, however, done its part ; and all the world had from its flame received at least some spark to spread still wider yet the everlasting fire.

A slight observation of the condition of the states of Italy will place us at that point of our narrative at which it was interrupted by the important revolution in the East. The endeavour of the holy pontiff, who, trembling for the throne which he occupied, would now, too late, have armed again the chivalry of Europe in a new crusade, had succeeded at least in effecting the pacification of Italy. Sforza had exhausted the treasury which had furnished his forces ; the terror of Mahomet seconded the instances of the church in the senate of Venice ; and the ambition of Naples, left single-handed to contend with the strength of its enemies in the midst of their territory, was compelled, however reluctantly, to retire from the field. Scarcely had Nicholas succeeded in effecting the desired peace of the peninsula, when, worn out with his labours, he left the chair to Calistus III. who in 1454 assumed the papal sovereignty. At the same moment

it appeared that the peace of Italy was still more certainly secured by the union of the house of Calabria with the recent ducal family of Milan, in the marriage of Alfonzo, son of the Calabrian Ferdinand, with the daughter of Sforza. Thus did all the states of Italy sink into the temporary and precarious peace of slavery.

The return to the affairs of Florence presents a melancholy spectacle. Neri Capponi had died, and left without a competitor the heartless ambition of Cosimo to prey upon the defenceless fortunes of his country. The liberties of Florence were now no longer dear to her citizens, but the safety of their persons and property was still in their own keeping; and if they thought but little of the principles on which the republican institutions of their earlier days had been founded, they were still unprepared to dispossess themselves of the long-exercised power which had made them the guardians of their own interests and rights. The ancient form of election was again desired by the adherents of Cosimo, who had grown weary or jealous of his power; they proposed the renewal of the *imborsations*, and the people were gratified at obtaining this superficial testimony of their influence. But Cosimo, against whose authority this reform was designed, to the mortification of his enemies lost nothing by the change. The people still made him their idol; and, in denying themselves the right of succession by nomination to office, in the capacity of his friends the disaffected relieved him of the necessity of guiding himself in part by their counsels, and of being governed in some measure by the consideration of their interests. When, however, Cosimo had thus obtained his release from a thralldom that might have proved not easy to remove, and presented himself as the advocate of the people by sustaining the introduction of the *imborsations* against those by whom it had been effected, but who, disappointed in its effect, would now gladly have

returned to the less republican form—after he had thus secured the utter extinction of that party which had ventured to oppose his desires and endanger his interests, he then began himself to desire the substitution of a form that might suit the altered character of the times ; that might accustom the populace to look without interest on the assumption of their former privileges by an irresponsible magistrate ; and that should, in fine, acknowledge the triumph of his interest over the public immunities. Luca Pitti was this year Gonfalonier, and upon him the sagacity of Cosimo settled as the instrument of his ambition.

At the moment of tranquillity, greater, perhaps, than had been known for many years to Florence, it was proposed to the magistracy to take from the people their newly recovered right, which they had exercised with all moderation. Girolamo Macchiavelli, exasperated at the impudence of the proposal, declared that nothing but the most restless ambition could have prompted its mover. Not even a shadow of difficulty or disturbance, he continued, had marked this exercise of popular power. "What reason then for this proposal ? Why introduce with this change a firebrand of discord into a peaceful and united city ? I ask not," said he, "a reply ; the motives for this change are the ambition and pride of those who propose it." This speech of the bold republican was unfortunately the impulse of a spirit that had outlived its age. Macchiavelli was seized as a traitor, and condemned to the rack. In the dismay which this outrage threw among the few who dared to think as he, the friends of Cosimo assembled the people ; the government was new-modelled, and the last remaining exercise of the republican institutions was destroyed by the abrogation of even the republican forms. The rights of the people thus transferred to the government, which became by this means, the sovereignty, instead of that which government is naturally intended to be, the organ, namely, of the

sovereignty ; efficient measures were taken for removing all possibility of danger, or even of opposition, to the newly-established order of things. Fourteen citizens were banished from the territory of the dominion which still called itself a republic, for their devotion to the republican institutions still remaining in the great wreck of their country's liberties ; and these, in all the vast population that wealth and commerce, and enterprize and good government had collected within the walls of Florence, were the only ones who were found to raise their voices in favour of the principles which had given her these exalting advantages. Among the fourteen, the most odious in the eyes of the now established tyranny, was Girolamo Macchiavelli ; and it was the satisfaction of hate and vanity, which, when he broke the limits of his place of exile, condemned him to an ignominious death.

Among the changes introduced with this revolution, it was thought expedient to give in name to the people that which had been taken from them in substance. The ancient priors of the arts were henceforward to be denominated Priors of Liberty. In the meanwhile new disturbances broke out in the South ; the crown of Naples became again the prize for which the houses of France and Aragon were to contend upon the soil of Italy. Florence was solicited to take part in the contest ; but wiser now for the security of her new masters, than she had been before for the prosperity of her citizens and preservation of their liberties, she resolved to keep her neutral position. Untouched in the interests for which she had been contented to see her ancient institutions overthrown, she reposed in absolute quiet, while the friends of Cosimo proceeded to develop the system which they had resolved to introduce. Precedence in rank became now a matter of importance to magistrates who no longer possessed the dignity with which the delegated sovereignty of the people had invested them. The creatures of Cosimo,

they now required outward show to supply the loss to which they themselves had consented ; but the tyranny which was thus being established for the inheritance of Cosimo's posterity, rendered these movements imperative. Luca Pitti was still the agent of the Medici in every measure for the concentration of their power ; while the head of that family had declined in vigour and in strength as he declined in years. All the evil of the last days of his long course of alternate violence, hypocrisy, and fraud, was perpetrated under show alone of his authority ; but the active tyrant of Florence was now his creature Pitti. Covetousness, malice, innate ferocity, prompted his every action ; yet still those actions, performed under colour of the advancement of Cosimo's authority, or in the accomplishment of his will, did, by accustoming the minds of the people to this paramount authority, tend in effect to confirm it. At the same time Pitti ruled in Florence ; and though he governed in the name of Cosimo, it was in fact without the least subjection to his counsels. Yet the miserable vanity of this man's ambition was pleased with the tribute thus paid to his influence ; and, wanting all energy to act or to direct, in the imbecility of his dotage he gloated on the blood that was shed in his name as a testimonial of his power—a power which he no longer knew even how to abuse, but which became a scourge in the hands of his unprincipled adherents.

The ferocious Pitti was nothing without the still authoritative name of Cosimo, but Cosimo was nothing for himself ;—all the hoarded power for which his life had been spent in peril and in the meanness of guilt, availed him nothing now but to build up the fortunes of those who made his name and his influence a covering for the advancement of their own interests and a sanction for crime. In the excitement of political opposition, Cosimo had rarely been able to reflect on the sorrows that awaited his age. It does indeed

appear, that the character of the family to which he belonged peculiarly fitted its members for the infamous work which it had been the fate of Cosimo to accomplish. The callous heart and the contracted soul had little need of the habit of evil-thinking and evil-doing to case them against the visitings of conscience, and retributive justice would in vain have delegated to that agent the infliction of its punishment. Still, the old age of Cosimo was visited with bitter affliction. He had lived a life of labour and care for the acquisition of power and of dignity not known to the republican institutions of his country. With him the authority which he sought was the end of his labours; and wherever such is the case, where influence is contended for not as a means, it is desired for the gratification of vanity alone, and cannot command the sympathy of the reflecting mind. When Cosimo contemplated the fabric which he had reared, he turned with anxious regard to his children, and leaned upon the hope that something of himself would still survive in them to wear the dignity, which appeared to him as nothing if he could foresee its termination in his family. Giovanni and Piero had both been educated in the school of their father; but Piero was indolent of habit, and infirm of health and of purpose. Giovanni was therefore the hope to which the vanity of his father was directed for the perpetuation of his name and influence. In the decline of his energies he looked to the certainty of Giovanni's succession; but with all his infirmities he was destined to survive this son, the object of his vanity as much as of his love.

On the melancholy decease of this his favourite son, Cosimo received the condolence of the most illustrious persons of his age. The father of the church addressed the language of consolation to the bereaved parent and disappointed prince; but he knew that he had lived his day, and the power about to pass from his name appeared almost a mockery while it remained; he

could not be soothed by that which acknowledged his own elevation to remind him that his fortunes had

“ Placed a barren sceptre in his grasp ;”

and when he beheld the feeble frame of his remaining son, and the children of that child each moment, perhaps, to be orphans ; when he looked at the structure which his pride had built up, in which, in regal pomp he wanted but the regal name, the old man felt that he had laboured in vain ; and, broken in spirit, if not contrite in heart, he looked with melancholy forebodings on the palace of his pride, and owned that *all is vanity*. “ These walls are too wide for those whom I shall leave to occupy them,” said he, as he paced through the spacious halls of his dwelling.

The children for whom he thus desponded were Julian and the magnificent Lorenzo. They were destined to rivet the last chains of Florence ; but even in them, in the apprehension of their fate was accomplished the punishment of Cosimo’s treason to the rights of liberty and human kind. In this apprehension he died, unsatisfied in his desires, and in doubt of that rule which he had established, beyond hope for the citizens indeed, but not beyond anxiety for the hours of his last illness and the moment of his death.

If the character of Cosimo be not now familiar to the reader, it can avail but little to sum up the good and evil of his life ; the former, if any, mingled with his repulsive vices, was all directed to the aid of his guilty purposes ; in his liberality, the ostentation of vanity may have borne a part ; but the establishment of a dangerous popularity, as it was the consequence, was also most probably the design ; the protection of letters secured to his interest the powerful minds of those who were engaged in their cultivation ; but had no selfish motives mingled with his liberality, had the admiration of genius alone induced the patronage which he extended to its exercise, we may acknowledge that

something of virtue is as inseparable as something of weakness and vice from the organization of man : but the name of Cosimo is that of the first tyrant of Florence—the first for whom the republican institutions of the only republic of Italy were sacrificed ; and it seems not idle, only because it is monstrous, to compare the single traits of goodness that distinguish his character and his course, with that one atrocity which in itself implies the concentration of every thing that sympathy with virtue and with manly dignity rejects. Servility, however, erected his monument ; and when, from one end of Europe to the other, the principles of liberty were extinct ; when it became noble ambition to despise the name of citizen, and to the sacred name of prince or king were yielded up the bounds of right and wrong ; all Europe then received his epitaph, and sanctioned his crimes by conferring on him the prostituted title of *Pater Patriæ*.

We may not be willing to concede to Cosimo the possession of that elevation of character which is necessary in the absence of high intellectual characteristics to confer upon an individual the epithet of *the great* ; yet no one will deny the greatness of the name which he has left to posterity. For the thirty years preceding his death, Italy had been accustomed to look upon him as one of her most illustrious sons ; in his popularity at Florence, Neri Capponi alone could stand for a moment beside him. In the states of Lombardy, Sforza had obtained a reputation still more brilliant, but scarcely less extensive, and an admiration scarcely less profound. During the lives of these had flourished and fallen a number of characters, which divided the wonder of their age, but which have been unable to contend with them in posthumous fame—Piccinino, Albizzi, and Filippo Maria Visconti ; unless we be willing to designate by that name the infamous notoriety of the latter. A new generation was now to appear upon the scene, and almost at the same moment, with

Cosimo, the last illustrious survivors of the great revolutions which they had seen and caused, Sforza and Capponi, were removed from the theatre of their exploits, their virtues, or their crimes. The era of Cosimo and his contemporaries is, perhaps, unsurpassed by any in Italian history, for the number of illustrious names by which it is signalized at least, if not adorned. To Francesco Sforza succeeded his son Galiazzo ; to Alphonso, Ferdinand ; and to Cosimo de' Medici, the sickly Piero. If we would justly estimate the value to Florence of the insidious munificence of the Medici, we have but to examine what were the opportunities at this moment afforded for the re-assertion of the Florentine liberty. From this examination, we are to look upon Florence herself ; we are to behold the feebleness of her efforts in behalf of the proffered emancipation, to see her falling into the arms of a despotism which had lost all power of coercion ; and, if we can, we may then unite in the praises which the affectation of literature bestows on the corruption of public virtue and the betrayal of human liberty.*

There was no one who expected that the succession of Piero to the fortune of his father, would enable him to assume at the same time the quiet and undisputed succession to the little less than sovereignty enjoyed by Cosimo. The prudent father had himself been solicitous for the fate of his house, and had endeavoured by the same means which he had found successful in

* " If, from considering the private character of Cosimo, we attend to his conduct as the moderator and director of the Florentine republic, our admiration of his abilities will increase with the extent of the theatre upon which he had to act. With whatever difficulties Cosimo had to encounter, at home or abroad, they generally terminated in the acquisition of additional honour to his country and to himself. The esteem and gratitude of his fellow-citizens were fully shewn a short time before his death, when by a public decree he was honoured with the title of *Pater Patriæ*, an appellation which was inscribed on his tomb, and which, as it was founded on real merit, has ever since been attached to the name of Cosimo de' Medici."—*Roscoe*.

the corruption of the population at large, to secure to his son the affection of those who might be proper instruments in his hands for retaining the people in servitude. Here, however, the sagacity of the old politician deserted him. It is not by remembered favours, but by hope of new ones, that the interested are to be held. Those, therefore, on whom he himself had expended his treasures, and whose faith to their country he had proved to be venal, should not have been trusted with the fortunes of his son.

Diotisalvi Neroni had been the creature of Cosimo, and for many years of his long life of hypocrisy acquainted with his traffic in all kinds of merehandize, among which the liberties of his country had been considered and held by him to differ from nothing else which might be valued in money and purchased for a price. To this man's ears the last advice of the expiring father consigned the affairs of his son; and the easily extorted promise, that the same obsequiousness which had waited on his own gradual elevation should also attend the inherited state of his successor, convinced the dying parent that he had found a faithful guardian for his house. In obedience to the express desire of Cosimo, Piero abandoned not only the direction, in a great measure, of public affairs, but even the management of his private concerns, to the trusted care of Diotisalvi.

There is, perhaps, no parallel in history of a people, proud and enlightened as the Florentines, having lost their freedom with so feeble a struggle as that which marked the usurpation of the Medici. For many generations that family, as we have seen, had been constantly before the eyes of the people, and daily increasing in popularity; yet from the first we scarcely distinguish one of its members endowed with those qualities which have usually been considered necessary for the acquisition of that popular favour which makes a people willing to entrust their cherished privileges to the

keeping of an individual, and to adopt his will for law. No dazzling achievement recommends them to the vulgar enthusiasm; and we may sympathize the less with the misfortunes of that people, whose rights were sacrificed, not by a generous error in the noble admiration of intellectual power, courage, or self-devotion, but to the basest motives of sordid interest. The reader of the preceding pages cannot deceive himself into a supposition that the Florentines were conquered by their oppressors; he is compelled to the acknowledgment that they were purchased by the Medici and sold by themselves. Yet Cosimo, with all his incalculable resources, had not been able to obtain this object of his ambition without an expenditure of capital that even he could scarcely bear, and that might render the inheritance of his successor an uncertain possession. To secure the affection or the dependence of the people at home, he had been compelled to render almost every man in Florence his debtor by extensive loans, which the borrowers might almost consider in the light of a benevolence; and to secure that influence in foreign courts which we have seen to have been of such avail to him in time of need, and which servile generations have cited as evidence of respect for his person and character, he had been obliged to stretch to the utmost the resources of his mind, fertile in all the expedients of commerce. In Naples, so vast had been the commercial relations of his house, that the calling in of his credits from that kingdom had deprived the crown of the ability to carry on the war in which it had leagued with the Venetian senate against Florence. Even England in her civil wars may be said to have received her monarch from his hand, inasmuch as the victories of Edward, which gave its temporary advantage to the house of York, were obtained by means of funds supplied from his exhaustless stores. The energy of his character, however, in the mingled relations of broker and politician, bore up against the continual

demands upon his resources ; and the influence of his name, thus important in the eyes of so many who felt their dependence on his forbearance or his further bounty, required at last very little aid from his somewhat disordered though not diminished means.

With his son it was in every particular the reverse. Piero enjoyed but little reputation, except as the successor of Cosimo. His inferiority had, with an unaccountable imprudence, been revealed by the preference openly manifested by the father for his younger son Giovanni ; and many of the same arts to which Cosimo had resorted in his youth, seemed necessary to secure to Piero the advantages which his predecessor had hoped to bequeath to him. All the wiles of the politician, the deceitful generosity, which, without diminishing his store, should seem to give, and which might indeed require the possession of, available funds, were now to be put again in exercise ; but the part of the merchant was to be enacted also for the accumulation of the means to be thus treacherously used, and the derangement of the commercial affairs of the Medici appeared to render the reconciliation of these opposing difficulties impracticable.

At this moment, had the spirit of liberty awakened the regeneration of Florence was secure ; but that spirit had been destroyed ; pomp, pedantry, and vanity, had blinded the sons of Florence to its extinction ; and the venal intrigues of avarice, or the narrow practices of ambition, appeared in all the efforts which were made to overthrow the feeble despotism that one united struggle for freedom would have crushed. The peculiar embarrassment of the situation in which the successor of Cosimo now found himself, suggested to Neroni the means of destroying his credit, and reducing him to the necessity of abandoning those hopes which his father had left him as a legacy, no less valuable than the countless treasures by which they had been begotten, and by which they were yet to be more fully

realized. He placed before the terrified merchant an account of his affairs, from which it seemed that the prosperity of his house was about to fail for want of large supplies of money to meet the extensive demands of its correspondents. While Piero trembled at the possible ruin of all that had seemed the basis of his power, the artful secretary placed before him the available credits on his books, and pointed to them as a means of restoring the shattered condition of his business. He advised him to call in the vast sums which, at a trifling interest, had been loaned by his father to the citizens, and which had been intended to bear a premium not of a mercantile nature. The insidious counsel was adopted by Piero, and all the debtors of the father were summoned to refund the amount of their loans to his successor. No sooner had the result of this measure answered the expectation of Neroni, in exciting against Piero a popular clamour, than numbers, whom a diversity of causes had arrayed against the family of the Medici, began now in concert to devise its overthrow. With Diotisalvi Neroni, the most active and zealous were Luca Pitti, Nicolo Soderini, and Agnolo Acciajuoli. Of these, the second had rendered himself too notorious as the accomplice of Cosimo's ambition, and as the cruel agent of his tyranny, to excite the public sympathy in behalf of any revolution in which he should appear as a leader. If not equally noted for crime, Neroni was not less conspicuous as the confidential friend of Cosimo, and as the depository of his most secret views; and Acciajuoli, it was well understood, had long been waiting for an opportunity of gratifying a private pique against Cosimo and his family. Soderini alone, in this conspiracy, appeared without suspicion in the attempt to revolutionize the state. The first result of Neroni's advice was not long in revealing to Piero the motive by which it had been dictated. Several respectable houses having paid, at his unexpected demand, the amounts which they had

borrowed from his father, and which, invested at a moderate interest, it was thought would never be demanded, were soon afterwards obliged to fail, and the credit of the city was thus shaken in the eyes of foreign merchants and of its own inhabitants. Unsparing in their reproaches, they cried aloud that Piero had resolved the ruin of his country; and they pretended to see, in the approaching nuptials of his son Lorenzo, a manifest reaching after the interdicted honours of royalty. "Cosimo," said they, "was satisfied with a wife from among the daughters of his fellow-citizens; and for his son, he looked not beyond the walls of his native city. The pride of Piero seeks, on the contrary, a princely union with the aspiring house of Orsini, and will not be satisfied till it mingles with patrician blood."

While the minds of the people were thus prepared for a conflict, the foreign relations of the government were about to afford a ground for a formal distinction of parties. It had been a part of the treaty between Florence, or rather between Cosimo and the duke of Milan, that an annual sum should be provided by the Florentines, and paid over to the duke for the expenses incurred by him in the wars which he had conducted, or might be called upon to conduct, for the league opposed to the Venetian aristocracy and the Neapolitan throne. A division of parties now occurred on the question of continuing this contribution to the successor of Francesco Sforza, to whom it had been pledged. Those whom the representations of the conspirators had excited against the family of the Medici, together with the conspirators themselves, contended that the tribute thus claimed had been paid, and if continued would be still paid, for the purpose of aiding the ambitious projects of the Medici; that Francesco Sforza had been much more the support of Cosimo than the ally of Florence; and that Piero was now seeking to purchase in the same manner with the people's money

a mercenary aid in his plot against the people's liberties. They urged, moreover, that now was the moment for relieving themselves from an oppressive and degrading imposition, and at the same time for depriving those who might be meditating any thing against the public safety of an assistance that might prove dangerous to the city's freedom. They supported their opinion by declaring that the contribution which had been levied for the purpose of securing the services of Sforza, if even those services had been required by the exigencies of the state, had been intended for that prince, and paid into his coffers in consideration of the influence of his talent and his name, and not in his capacity of duke of Milan; that thus it had been paid to a soldier of Florence, engaged, as many other sovereign princes had been, in her service; but that if the Florentines had been deceived into the levying of a tax for the duke of Milan, they had then rendered themselves in all respects the tributaries of his government. To these arguments the friends of Piero could make but a shallow reply. They endeavoured to show that the very inferiority of Galeazzo to his father, which had been assumed as a reason for withholding the contribution, was, in fact, the most powerful argument in favour of its continuance, inasmuch as it afforded new reason to fear the encroachments of Venice on the side of Lombardy. The parties thus in opposition to each other were yet to be designated by titles that should indicate their hostility; and as the revolutionists assumed the name of *Mountaineers*, from the residence of Luca Pitti by the monte San Giorgio, the friends of the Medici were called the party of the *Plain*. Nightly meetings were now held on both sides, and numbers of those, whom zeal for the ancient government, or habitual affection for the old institutions, or more unworthy motives attached to the interests of Piero's enemies, attended these meetings in throngs, solicitous to add their names to the long list of those who had pledged

themselves to redeem their country from the disgraceful enthrallment into which it had fallen. A fatal division of sentiment, however, interfered, to arrest, and, indeed, to prevent, the fall of the feeble usurper. Many were of opinion that, as the period for which the *Balia* had been created was about to expire, it was unwise to resort to violence; that Piero's influence was not sufficient to obtain its renewal against the public wish; that upon its expiration the ancient order of things would necessarily supervene; and that the distraction of the affairs of Piero in his commercial relations thus secured the ruin of his family, built up as it had been on the basis of wealth, and supported by an insidious but unlimited munificence. The opposite party of the faction rejected the timidity of this advice. They insisted that the only security against the high-reaching ambition of Piero, who wanted nothing of his father's desires however he might be destitute of his talents, depended on his death; while the general excitement against his person rendered this measure no less safe than expeditious and certain.

The citizens had long ceased to be governed by those principles which had formerly assured them the victory in every contest for liberty; and it is not to be doubted that the greater number of those who now desired the downfall of the Medici, were impelled by personal rather than public feeling; every thing, therefore, gave way to the savage desire of glutting a long-repressed hatred with blood; and the strength of those who clamoured for a resort to force, outweighed by a great majority the prudent and more disinterested opinion of those who, as they desired but the public good, were willing to sacrifice all personal resentment to its attainment.

It was however agreed to await the drawing of the new *Signoria* at the expiration of the term of the existing *Balia*, and then to proceed according as the lot should chance to return a Signory opposed to the Me-

dici or in favour of their interests. In the midst of the best hopes that the general eagerness for the subversion of Piero's tyranny had begun to excite, the usual difficulties attending all secret combinations which require time and forbearance, arose to thwart the almost accomplished undertaking. Even those who had been chosen to the most honourable offices in the conspiracy, began to calculate the advantage which they might derive from betraying it. Niccolo Fedini had been selected as secretary to the conspirators, and the long list of Piero's enemies, who had subscribed to his sentence of deposition or death, was in his hands. The tempting offer of a successful treachery was too powerful for his virtue; with this list he resolved to secure the favour of the intended victim, who, if he should escape, became at once a sovereign; and, in the determination of thus securing his own fortune, he applied for admittance at the gates of the palace of the Medici. It is not known what terms the traitor was able to make with Piero; but it is probable that he did not lightly tax the terror which he had thus been able to arouse.

Piero had rested almost as certain of the power which his father had transmitted, in his name, as though it had been a legal inheritance; he started, therefore, at the extent of the danger by which he found himself thus suddenly environed, and, shaking off his habitual lethargy, prepared for a contest with his adversaries. With the aid of Fedini he prepared new lists, and inviting all those whose motives in signing the resolutions against him might be questionable, he succeeded in collecting a no less formidable array of names in his support; among which, as Fedini had calculated, were not a few who, from feelings that had no sympathy with patriotism or principle, appeared on the catalogue of his opponents.

While these preparations were in diligent prosecution upon either side, the moment arrived for the choice

of the new magistracy. The fortune of the lot presented Niccolo Soderini as Gonfalonier. A universal burst of joy, upon the annunciation of this event, proclaimed the intensity with which the people had watched the decision of the umpire to which they had confided their political destinies. Soderini was known as the friend of the city's charter, and as the zealous opponent of the Medicean usurpation. His path through the streets of the city, on his way to receive the dignity to which he had been elected, was a triumphal procession; the most respectable citizens joined with the mob in the loudest demonstrations of joy, and, placing a crown of laurel on his head, invited him to secure the restoration of their country. Those who even still revered the memory of Cosimo de' Medici, and believed in the honesty of his intentions, by joining in the triumph of the republican party, showed to the trembling tyrant who had succeeded to the wily politician, that all his means of corruption, and all the terror of his name, had bought but the lips of his countrymen, that their hearts were with the buried liberties of the republic.

The brother of Soderini, however, who as far surpassed him in ability as he yielded to him in moral dignity, had united his fortunes to those of the Medici. He had foreseen that the love of liberty in the hearts of his countrymen was now a weaker passion than the love of peace or the desire of profit; and that, however for a moment they might yield to the generous impulse of the one, they were certain to be governed at last by the cold calculations of the other. Undeceived, therefore, by the universal cry that welcomed the election of his brother, and unmoved by the general enthusiasm for the restoration of the popular power, Thomas Soderini betook himself to the task of overreaching the simple honesty of Niccolo; and, careless of the fame with which his brother might have descended among the most illustrious champions of freedom in the pages

of his country's history, he bent all the power of his subtle mind to lead him to the disappointment of the hopes which had hailed him as the deliverer of his country, the restorer of her rights, and the redeemer of her children. Unfortunately Niccolo lent a too ready ear to the representations of this unprincipled counselor. He was easily persuaded to believe that every thing had been obtained in his election, and that the acquiescence of all in the mode by which his elevation had been effected was a sufficient vindication of the old institutions. At the same time he was amused by his brother with various plans for the perpetuation of the newly-recovered equality; but while the time was thus consumed in idle projects for the future organization of the government, the moment arrived at which, having accomplished nothing of the many things which had been anticipated from his administration, the law required that he should lay down the ensigns of office, and summon the people again to the exercise of their sovereignty in the choice of his successor. From a popularity with which no citizen had been before his time so honourably dignified, Soderini now sunk into the lowest contempt, and left his name as a proverb for imbecility.

It then became obvious that the fate of the parties between which Florence was divided must be decided by arms. Hercules, the brother of the duke Borso of Este, on invitation of the malcontents appeared on the confines of Pistoia at the head of 1300 horse, while the tyrants of Bologna and Milan embraced with eagerness the cause of the Medici. But Piero had learned in the family records of his ancestors to fight with surer weapons than the sword; and when, in the last despair of saving the country which he still ardently loved, the humbled Soderini called on Pitti and the rest of those on whom he had been accustomed to look as his coadjutors in the cause of the republic, he found himself deserted by all on whom he had depended for

aid. The victory of Piero was thus secured ; Soderini, therefore, without attending the order which he knew must soon be issued for his banishment, departed into voluntary exile amid the vain regret that he had neglected the last fortunes of his country confided to his care, and little less than betrayed by his credulity.

The Signoria had preserved in all these differences a judicious neutrality ; it now dispatched a commission to wait upon the victor without a compromise of independence, to obtain what concessions or what assurances it might from Piero's moderation. If for a moment the deputation permitted itself to employ the language of right and power, it was soon made sensible that Piero was now no longer willing to acknowledge any authority paramount to his own. After a brief interval, the formation of a new Balìa confirmed the ascendancy of Piero, and carried still one degree farther the supremacy established by his father over the rights of the people and the majesty of the laws. Of all those who had conspired against his government, Luca Pitti was the only individual that escaped his resentment ; an escape for which he was most probably indebted much less to the gratitude or the good faith of Piero than to the contempt with which he, in common with all his contemporaries, regarded the venal traitor.

In their banishment the Florentine exiles forgot nothing of the hostility which they had sworn against the oppressor of their native city. They flocked in numbers to Venice, whose jealousy of Florence was well known to them ; and, calling to her recollection the alliance which had subsisted between the Medici and the Sforzas to the manifest disadvantage of her interests, they invited her aid for the purpose of humbling the family by which her pride had been more galled than even her interests had been shocked. By representations such as these, and by the not improbable assurances that their coming would be welcomed by the citizens with open arms, the exiles succeeded in

putting under arms a force of 8000 horse and 6000 foot, collected in the territory of the Venetian senate and of other authorities, under the command of Bartolommeo Colleone, the most respectable commander of that era in Italy.

Against Venice and her allies, Florence received in this conjuncture the aid of the tyrants of Naples and Milan ; but a war undertaken without principle promised little of importance in its results, and the exiles by whom it had been excited, unable to maintain the promises which they had made to their allies of effecting a rising in their favour within the city, soon found themselves abandoned to the resentment of their exasperated enemies. It now became hopeless to resist the strength of the current on which the fortunes of Piero seemed to ride to undisputed sovereignty. All the chances which the feebleness of his constitution had seemed to offer for the reassertion of the ancient liberties had been seized by Lorenzo his son, and converted into a means of securing his father's authority. The deep intent and unrelenting will, concealed beneath a mask of pleasantry and gentleness, awoke no fears and excited no hatred in the minds of those whom he was marking for slavery ; and a natural turn for the festivities peculiar to the age, and in which the Florentines more especially delighted, served to gain him the regard of all who could not or who did not care to look beyond the moment they themselves enjoyed ; who troubled themselves little concerning the rights which they lost, atoned for as they were by the momentary enjoyments obtained ; and who did not see that these pleasures, conferred as a favour, might, when no end remained to be answered, be suspended or totally withheld. Immediately after the establishment of peace, therefore, preparations were made for entertaining the people with tournaments and jousts ; and the aspiring Lorenzo was foremost to venture his person, and to carry off the palm, in all the contests that belong to

such exhibitions. It was necessary to obtain a character with the populace ; and the reputation of valour which might be acquired in these bloodless encounters, was attended with nothing of the danger to which a participation in even the not sanguinary battles of his country would have exposed him. There were, most probably, very few in Florence who would have chosen to be declared in these engagements the conqueror of the heir of Picro de' Medici. In the midst of such rejoicings the marriage of Lorenzo was solemnized with the patrician lady Clarice Orsini. This marriage had been severely reprobated by the opposition as an evidence of a too aspiring ambition on the part of the Medici ; it is probable that the pride of Lorenzo was gratified in thus seducing the people into the celebration of that event, which might be considered the first manifest declaration of his invasion of their long-cherished equality. Certain it is that the nuptial pomp increased the splendour of the festivities, in which, for more than three months, the whole city had been made to participate, and for which not less than the preparation of five months had been required.

It is not improbable that the death of Piero, which was now hourly expected, might have opened again new opportunities to the few remaining individuals who clung in memory to the free institutions, the mere title and form of which still dignified Florence with the name of the Republic ; had it not been that all those who belonged to that party, and who enjoyed the confidence of the people, were advanced in age, and that each day thinned the number of the venerable band. Nicolo Soderini perhaps alone had possessed in a sufficient degree that confidence to use it with a reasonable prospect of success ; he, however, had suffered the occasion to pass, and with his death, which occurred some years after at Venice, it is certain that the strength of the old party of the republicans may be considered as extinct. A new generation may indeed

have supplied new members, but the utmost which was reserved for them was the attempt to shake off an established tyranny; the elder race alone could have supported the constitution of the ancient liberty. Notwithstanding his infirmities, therefore, Piero outlived the possibility of the restoration of the republic in outliving the most prominent of its advocates; and as he had been less guilty than Cosimo, so his death was less tormented by fears for the fate of his children. With all the faults of his nature, and it is hardly to speak too strongly to say with all the innate evil that belonged to his character as one of the Medici—as one of a family in which the meanness of vice appears to have been an inevitable inheritance, the son of Cosimo is not answerable for the enslavement of his country. There is reason even to believe, that, disgusted with the licentiousness of those who in the name of his party would have struck at the root of all social order and private right, Piero contemplated, in the possession of little less than sovereign power, the restoration of the exiles; which was, in fact, the same as an acknowledgment of their honesty and a recognition of their principles. With this view he had already conferred in private with Agnolo Acciajuoli, his capital enemy, and begun with him a treaty for the return of those who by his power had been banished, when, overtaken by a violent attack of his malady, he found his virtuous designs cut off by the rapid approach of his dissolution.

It has been the habit of most writers to decry the character of this member of the Medicean family. Apologists have, indeed, sometimes ventured to speak in his behalf; and it has been deemed a species of praise to account for his inferiority by the circumstance of his occupying so imposing a situation as that which intervened between the eras of men like his father and his son; as if, indeed, to have been less instrumental than they in the ruin of the most illustrious

and most glorious fabric of human wisdom,—the free constitution of an independent people,—were a subject of reproach. All that later ages have found to praise in Cosimo and Lorenzo is the love of literature and the arts; a love which extended to them, it must be allowed, an encouraging and efficient patronage. Yet if, indeed, the greater part of this were not an affectation, it cannot claim the praise of more than enlightened selfishness, refined by habit and the spirit of the age. And this, moreover, whatever may be the credit to which it should entitle Lorenzo and Cosimo, shone in Piero no less conspicuously; but Piero neither planned nor consummated the enslavement of his country; and servile Europe, accustomed to the virtue of loyalty alone, has found no language of encomium for his forbearance and moderation. The death of Piero, who had not yet reached his fifty-third year, occurred in the month of December, A. D. 1469, while Lorenzo and Julian were still in their nonage. No hopes, however, seem to have been formed on this account for the regeneration of the state, though many fears were entertained of new dangers from the facilities which it might afford to the ambitious and designing, of disturbing the dishonourable quiet which was now the first object of care to the degenerate citizens. While in this apprehension, the populace were looking with consternation on the transmission, to such youthful hands, of the vast authority of the Medici, Tommaso Soderini, who had been left as guardian, or at least as confidential counsellor, to the brothers, convened an assembly of the principal citizens, and laid before them a statement of the power and resources possessed by the Medici, inferring the utter hopelessness of any attempt to subvert their influence. When Soderini had made an end of his harangue, his pupil Lorenzo came forward to conciliate, if possible, the affections of those of whose actions and wills he already felt himself master. The assembly listened with attention to the youthful

orator ; and even those, perhaps, who bore little affection to his person, were pleased at the indications which he gave of an ability to command, and to secure them tranquillity while he yet deprived them of power. So effectually, indeed, did he address himself to the interests of those by whom he was heard ; so ably was his cause sustained by his adviser ; and so desperate did they succeed in representing the hope of resistance or opposition ; that scarcely a shadow of objection was made to the assumption, as if hereditary, by the children, of all the authority exercised by their father ; and thus the constitution of the republic, which had been for three generations giving way before the insidious advances of the Medici, was annihilated in the fourth. At Florence not a single hostile movement attended this final change ; and all her dependencies, now contented with their thralldom, imitated the example of her submission. A slight attempt of one Bernardo Nardi to excite the citizens of Prato with the cry of liberty against the degrading despotism of the Florentine merchants, but served to show how entirely that sound had ceased to find an echo in the breast of the Italians. Scarcely a single individual responded to the call ; and the wretched Nardi, betrayed by those whom he would have saved, became the victim of their servility and of his own untimely patriotism. With the assistance of a few Florentines dwelling in Prato, the inhabitants possessed themselves of his person, and sending him a prisoner to Florence, gave him up as the first offering of blood to propitiate the tyranny which had invaded and desecrated the last sanctuary of liberty in Italy. It is needless to add that the sacrifice was accepted, and that the blood of Nardi was required to satisfy the outraged pride which now wielded the sceptre, even though it wore no crown and sat upon no throne. The apparatus of death, however, possessed no terrors for the firm republican ; and to the interrogations of his judges he replied with a spirit that in the better days

of the commonwealth would have drawn the swords of a thousand freemen in his defence. "I came hither," said he, "to die. It was my wish to perish for Florence, and within her walls—to perish in the effort to signalize in her behalf—in the attempt to give her back to her glory, the last hour of the life of a republican."

Of all the historians of Florence during the age of the Medici, Macchiavelli is the most unvarying in his praise, though certainly not the most enthusiastic. Perhaps, indeed, we may discover in his commendation the disgust much rather which had closed his heart against all sympathy with the feelings and all compassion for the weakness of his countrymen, than a real admiration of the character of the Medici; nothing speaks more loudly or more distinctly in all his writings than the contempt with which he beheld the instability of purpose manifested in the political conduct of the Florentines during the latter period of the republican rule. With all the praises, however, which admiration of the Medici, or indignation at the conduct of his fellow-citizens, extorted from the lips of Macchiavelli, his sagacious and observant mind could not be misled in forming its judgment of the age, which had first submitted to the undisguised substitution of a despotism for the sovereignty of the laws. The observations of such a writer are the proper comment on the character of the times, and on the lives of those by whom that character had been fostered from the moment of its creation, and turned in its progress to the ruin of a happy and illustrious people.

"After this insurrection, which had been so suddenly raised and as soon suppressed," continues the impartial historian, alluding to the unfortunate attempt of Nardi, "the citizens of Florence began to sink into luxury and effeminacy, imagining they might indulge themselves with security in any sort of intemperance and excess, now the government was quietly settled

upon so good a foundation. From whence many of those evils and inconveniencies ensued, which are usually the attendants of a long peace. For the youth growing more dissolute than ever they had been before, and having nothing else to do, threw away their time and estates in dress, in feasting, in gaming, and women, and such other dissipations. Their whole study and emulation was to surpass each other in fine clothes, in quaint expressions and repartees ; and he was generally accounted the greatest wit, who was the most satirical. These follies and extravagancies were still increased by the arrival of the duke of Milan at Florence, whither he came about that time, attended by his duchess and all his court (to fulfil some vow, which, it was said, he had made) and was received with all the magnificence and respect that were due to so powerful a prince, and so great a friend to the republic. It then happened to be the time of Lent ; and though the eating of flesh meat in that season is strictly forbidden by the church, his courtiers made no scruple in feasting upon it every day, without any dispensation or the least regard either to the laws of God or man : a thing that was never seen in our city before. Amongst many other spectacles that were exhibited to shew him the greater honour, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles was represented in the church of Santo Spirito : and as there was an infinite number of candles lighted up upon that occasion, the church, by some accident, took fire, and was burnt down to the ground ; which many thought was a judgment upon the city ; and that God, being offended, had inflicted that punishment upon it as a mark of his displeasure. In this state of corruption and dissolution of manners the duke found the city of Florence, and left it so much worse at his departure, that the more sober and considerate part of the administration thought it necessary to make a sumptuary law to restrain these exorbitancies in dress, in feastings, and other solemnities, and to

regulate the expences of their fellow-citizens on those occasions, in such a manner that they should not exceed the bounds of frugality and discretion."*

The year 1471 is interesting in Italian history for the death of Paul II. which made way for the succession of Sixtus IV. to the papacy. It had been the fate of Florence, as we have already witnessed, to be united in a league with the heads of the church, or rather to have acted as if in the strictest dependence upon their will. Occasional differences had for a moment separated their interests; but from the first quarrels of the Guelphs and the Ghibelines, in which the party of Rome had been so triumphantly sustained by the Florentines, to the moment when the fugitive Eugenius took sanctuary within her walls, the great republic of Italy must be ranked among the closest adherents of the papal despotism. The ambition of the prelate now called to hold the keys and the sword, in opposition to that of the new-risen sovereignty in Florence, effected at last a severance of that union which, perhaps, is answerable for the enslavement of the peninsula. This separation was of course too late to remedy the evils which the unnatural combination had induced; but the jealousies of the rival parties were productive of some of the most important and interesting events in the decline of the republic, or rather in the establishment of the empire of its oppressors.

After the suppression of the rising at Prato, Lorenzo appears to have considered the rule of his family as fixed on the firmest basis of power, and to have longed for an opportunity of exercising its prerogatives with a cruelty that did not belong to the character of his race. Perhaps, indeed, in few instances are the most wanton atrocities of irresponsible sovereignty the result so much of an innate fondness for blood, and of the pleasure to be derived from the spectacle of human suffering,

* Farneworth's Macchiavelli.

as of that craving vanity which seeks the continual acknowledgment of power, and is gratified by even the curses of the victims which attest its existence. Whatever then, in the present instance, may have been the principal motive—whether state expediency, or the excitement of anger, or the goadings of vanity,—Lorenzo was not displeased with the occasion that afforded him an opportunity of exercising the authority with which he found himself vested, and of trying, perhaps, how far its exercise would be endured.

Volterra had long acknowledged allegiance to Florence; and the habit of obedience on one side, and of command on the other, had converted the protection which the Volterrans had sought from the people of Florence, into an unqualified tyranny. Long after the inhabitants of the subject city had lost not only the hope, but, as it appears, the desire itself, of independence, they had still preserved many municipal rights identified with their pecuniary interests. On occasion of some dispute involving these interests, Lorenzo de' Medici had been chosen as umpire between the community as complainants, against the holders of a certain valuable monopoly supported by the delegated authorities of Florence. Impatient of delay, or uncertain, perhaps, of the faith with which Lorenzo might perform the office of judge, in a moment of excitement the Volterrans refused to attend his decision, and, without considering the impossibility of supporting their revolt, proceeded against the Florentine governors of their city. Immediately afterwards, restored to reflection, they were anxious to atone for their error, and despatching to Florence a deputation, they entreated to be allowed to resume their allegiance. Tommaso Soderini, with the timidity of his disposition, fearing the result, of a contest, to the interest which he had espoused, undertook to advocate their cause; but Lorenzo was fixed in his resolve, and the mandate was issued from his palace for the devastation of the un-

happy city. For a day and a night the slaughter of the citizens was permitted by the leader, whom the advice of Lorenzo had placed over the armies of the offended state. Lorenzo was, no doubt, secretly well pleased to strike, by this act of severity, a salutary terror of his displeasure to the breasts of his more immediate subjects, without the danger which would have attended such an exercise of his power among themselves. It is, therefore, more than probable that Frederic of Urbino, by whom the siege had been conducted, would scarcely have permitted the indiscriminate slaughter of the young and the old, of women and children, unless he had been possessed of the political secret which made such cruelty on his part a recommendation to the favour of the ruling dynasty at Florence.

The breach between the reigning party at Florence, or, in other words, between the Florentine government and the papal court, though not yet constituting an overt hostility, tended to form a new union of parties and interests among the principal states of Italy. In the north, the duke of Milan and the senate of the Venetian aristocracy had, from the first advances of Francesco Sforza towards the sovereign power which he ultimately acquired, considered each other natural enemies. Florence, united in the friendship of the Medici and the Sforzas to the side of Milan, had also excited the jealousy and the displeasure of Venice, the rather as the treaties which existed between the Florentines and the Turkish sultan, while that conqueror was daily subduing the dependencies of the senate in the Grecian seas, appeared to indicate the Tuscan city as a growing and dangerous rival, for commercial and naval supremacy, to the Adriatic queen. Here then was an insuperable barrier to a cordial alliance between these principal states, which, on the other hand, were forcibly thrown together with all their opposition of interests, by the unexpected direction of public af-

fairs in the South. The king of Naples was at this moment the most dangerous enemy within the Alps to the independence of the several states, that, having forfeited their civil liberty, still boasted their national freedom. Until the election of pope Sixtus, the influence of Venice in the councils of the church had kept the ambition of Naples in salutary check. With the decease of Paul, that check was removed, and nothing was found to interfere with the sincerity or the fervour of the league which Sixtus and Ferdinand opposed to the jealous union of the cities of the centre and the north. Thus prepared for conflict, but without a pretext for commencing it, all Italy was once again on the eve of a general convulsion; but how different are the interests for which we see her various states arrayed in the attitude of defiance and defence, from those which dignified, in the early portion of our history, the councils and the battles of the free cities, whose whole population moved in their wars, and which were never arrayed in the attitude of hostility without the impulse of a principle. Now the jealousy of individual power converted, or seemed at least about to convert, all Italy into a camp.

The history of all the nations of antiquity, compared with those of modern times, affords a lesson to those who, in the destruction of public liberty and the decline of public virtue, yet dwell upon the recollection of the better eras of their country's history, when the rights of humanity had not been sacrificed to the specious or violent encroachments of tyranny. It may, indeed, be almost received as an established principle, that when patriotism is driven for vindication of the laws to that which, in another cause, would be denominated crime, it has outlived the period in which it can be beneficially exercised. Still, however, so strong is the impulse which urges to this vindication of right, that this lesson, with all the frequency of its occurrence, does not yet appear to have convinced the few who are bold

enough to need its instruction. The fate of Galeazzo Sforza presents a lively and unfortunate illustration of the truth of our position. It had not been the fortune of Francesco Sforza, more than the crimes of the princes of the house of Visconti, which had secured to the former the dukedom of Milan on the death of Filippo Maria. The atrocities which had marked the succession of monarchs, from the time of the accession of the archbishop of Milan to that of the last prince of his family, had rendered the Milanese desirous of any change which might rescue them from so degrading a subjection. No sooner, nevertheless, had the acquired rule of the Sforzas descended but one generation, and assumed the ordinary character of a legitimate sovereignty, than all the regal vices which had made the name of the Visconti odious to the people over which its possessors had ruled, were presented in the person of the new sovereign to the unhappy Milanese. The public at large abandoned themselves to despair, and were willing to hug the chains that they could not disengage. Thence it became madness to dream of restoring them to a freedom which they had ceased to appreciate, and which they would not accept at the price of the dangers by which it was to be maintained. Unable, however, to judge beyond the feelings of their own excited bosoms, there were a few individuals who resolved to make the attempt. Three young students, inflamed by the study of the classics, in which the praises of liberty were continually repeated, and the disgrace of slavery depicted, by authors who wrote for the fierce republicans of Rome, conceived the idea of restoring the freedom of the city, now for many generations abandoned by the citizens. Fixed in their resolve, they attended with impatience the day on which they had determined to execute their plans, and, full of the ardour inspired by the cause, forgot the sanctity of the spot on which they had concerted to immolate their victim. It may be also that

with the fulness of enthusiasm the spirit of religion mingled itself, and that the sacred character of the intended altar in their eyes made the contemplated murder more like a sacrifice. Saint Stephen's day was chosen by them for the accomplishment of their purpose, as it was known that, on the occasion of celebrating the martyrdom of that saint, the duke would not fail to be present. They trusted, moreover, that it would then be easy in so large an assembly to summon the people to the re-assertion of their liberties ; and that the conspiracy, then first made known in the moment of its successful issue, might appear to the congregated host to have a more extensive support, when each one was ignorant of his fellow's ignorance, and might suppose him a party to the design. The three young men, Giovanni Andrea Lampognano, Carlo Visconti, and Girolamo Olgiato, with their master, were the only individuals made acquainted with the plot. On the appointed day the conspirators were at their posts, and after commending themselves and their enterprize to to the care of the saint who was supposed to watch as peculiar guardian over the destinies of their country, they disposed themselves in such a manner as to secure the blow which they were about to strike. After many delays, Galeazzo, attended by a princely escort of court satellites, made his appearance at the principal door of the temple. He crossed the threshold, but never reached the altar towards which he was approaching. Each of the conspirators had consecrated himself to death if necessary to make sure their victim. In the midst of his attendants, they rushed on the miserable tyrant ; and while Lampognano seized his arms, the comrades of his bold undertaking plunged their daggers each a second time into the body of the prince. The first indication to the assembled multitude of any tumult was the prostration of Galeazzo, who fell, without the slightest opportunity of resistance, under the unexpected assault. Six blows of the con-

spirators' daggers made as many mortal wounds ; and the resolute youths, when they beheld him at their feet, believed that they had given back freedom to Lombardy. Scarcely an individual, however, moved in their behalf ; and Lampognani and Visconti, surrounded by the hired escort of the duke, were suffered to be slain upon the body of him whom they had vainly hoped to make an offering to the liberty of their country. Olgiati escaped in the confusion from the building, but no one held the hand of friendship to receive him ; and where he had looked to find himself proclaimed a deliverer, he found himself branded as a murderer. Disappointed thus in the dearest object of his desires, he easily allowed himself to fall into the power of the police, desirous of terminating an existence whose brightest hopes were withered by the pusillanimity of his fellow-citizens. Yet in the desertion of his friends and the shame that he felt for his country, he derived consolation from the motive of his generous action ; and while the civil authority declared him a traitor, and the officer of its decrees prepared to execute his sentence by the infliction of a felon's punishment upon him, wrapped in recollections of the past or in vision of the time to come, and filled with the enthusiasm of the ancient republic, from the pages of whose history he had drunk in the love of liberty, and whose language seemed to him, in that moment of his country's degradation, as alone fitted to express the emotions of his soul, the young hero exclaimed, as the executioner was striking the fatal blow, with a loud voice and an undisturbed accent, *Mors acerba, fama perpetua, stabit vetus memoria facti !* Thus, at the age of twenty-three, the last asserter of the Lombard republic perished on the scaffold.

CHAPTER II.

Jealousy of the Families of the Pazzi and Medici.—Conspiracy of the Pazzi and the Pope.—Death of Julian de' Medici, and Failure of the Attempt to reform the State.—The Florentines excommunicated.—Embassy of the Florentines to the Pope, and Removal of the Interdict.—Conspiracy of the Frescobaldi.—Death of Sixtus, and Election of Innocent VIII.—General Peace in Italy.—Death of Lorenzo de' Medici.—Piero, his Son, succeeds to his Authority.—Election of Alexander VI.—Pretensions of Charles VIII. to the Throne of Naples.—Preparation for the Invasion of Italy.

WHILE these things were passing in the North, the ambition of the pope and the Medici was ripening into personal hatred in the Centre and the South. The first act of hostility, which both parties were waiting but for an opportunity of commencing, was committed by the Church in the investment of Francesco Salviati as archbishop of Pisa. The opposition of this prelate to the family of the Medici was notorious, and his appointment could be considered in no other light than as a direct attack upon the ruling interest at Florence. This open disregard of their desires by the pope, inflamed the fury of the Signoria, now in the acknowledged dependence of the Medici. They refused, therefore, to give possession to the nominee of Sixtus, and for a long time succeeded in holding him excluded. In meeting so unusual an act of insubordination, the pope resolved to charge it at once to the Medici, by making them responsible for its commission; accordingly, withdrawing the funds of the papacy, which had for a long time been intrusted to their house, he transferred the important and lucrative charge to the family of the Pazzi, the most zealous of all whom virtuous principle or interest had collected into one party of opposition to the Medicean administration. A long rivalry had divided these powerful families. The Pazzi had

belonged originally to the castle nobility, which in the early ages of the republic had given so much difficulty to its citizens and magistrates; and if, in the general impulse in favour of democracy, they had been compelled to abandon the charter of their nobility, their opposition to the Medici was, perhaps, embittered by the recollection that the time had been in which a member of the family of the Pazzi would have set his dependents to contend with the ignoble progenitors of the arrogant money-dealers who now pretended to rule over the destinies of the city. Cosimo had always held in dread the well-known dislike which the Pazzi were at no pains to conceal. He knew that when public virtue had failed, the resentment of private jealousy might succeed against all the intrigues of his house; and he looked to the Pazzi as those who, from their influence, their boldness, and their ancient enmity, might be designated the first, and at the same time the most unmanageable, of the opposition which he anticipated for his contemplated usurpation. To remove all cause of fear, and to render, if possible, the interests of the two families identical, or to make, at least, the influence of his rivals conducive to the advancement of his race, he had negotiated a union by the marriage of his grand-daughter Bianca with Guglielmo, one of the most prominent members of the family which he wished to conciliate. The disposition of Lorenzo, so unlike that of his grandfather, as indeed were the epochs in which they respectively flourished, rejected with indignation the unnatural tie. He could not cease, even with those who had now become a part of his family, to assume the prince; and he was willing that they should be invested with all the honours of the state, but on the condition that they were willing to receive them as his gift. This ground, assumed on the respective sides, it became no less a matter of necessity than of pride to maintain the position. Lorenzo, having the controul of the Signory, therefore found

it not difficult to exclude the Pazzi from office whenever they were candidates for public employments.

If for a time the hatred of the principal members of either family was only manifested in political opposition, it was not long before Lorenzo found an opportunity of convincing the obstinate Pazzi that he had indeed possessed himself of all authority in the state ; that his hand directed the government ; and that his voice controlled the last sanctuary of freedom,—the courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction. The discovery of this fact it was, most probably, that convinced them of the hopelessness of an appeal to the constituted authorities, and drove them to seek the last resource of the injured, by resort to personal adjudication. In cases like this it is that individuals are driven to the ultimate appeal which nature authorizes when the organ of society is destroyed, when the social compact is dissolved, and the fountains of social life are poisoned or spent—then it is that the voice of nature prompts the means of attack and defence, while all the ordinary rules of moral law are suspended or destroyed. It may be that, even in the violation or dissolution of the political bond, the individual still is subject to the closer law which governs the relations of men ; and that it is only the mass, which, freed from constitutional restraint, can justly assume the responsibility of a resort to force ; but when, in addition to this violation, the rights of the individual are invaded, and the machine by which his intercourse with his fellow is broken, he must resort to the first principles furnished by nature to all her works for their preservation, or allow himself to be stricken from the number of her creations.

A rich inheritance had fallen to the right of the wife of Giovanni de' Pazzi, the only daughter of Giovanni de' Borromei. To this inheritance (most probably by instigation of Lorenzo), a nephew of the deceased pretended a claim against the natural heir. Recourse

was had to the law ; but the law was silent, and the voice of power spoke in its stead. The right of the daughter was set aside, and the inheritance was given to a stranger, for such the nephew might be considered in a contest with the child of Borromei. Julian de' Medici, the more crafty, or at least, the less headstrong, brother of Lorenzo, was terrified himself at the possible effect of so barefaced a corruption as that by which it was proposed to strip the wife of Giovanni of her patrimony ; he could not believe that the Florentines, though willing to resign all participation in the political administration, were yet prepared for the depravation of those institutions which have always been held most sacred in the progress of evil society, and which, dedicated to the administration of justice, have been generally respected by the most irresponsible despots.

But nothing was sacred in the eyes of Lorenzo ; and as he was without that salutary fear, which, in the absence of principle, serves to restrain the passions and evil propensities of men, so he was without a check in the unprincipled pursuit of his objects, whether of ambition or revenge. The injuries continually heaped on this proud and spirited family, seemed for a time productive of no other result than such as the vanity or spleen of Lorenzo desired. Jacopo de' Pazzi, who was considered the head of his house, was silent beneath the repeated insults which were offered to his name ; and the inferior members, looking with deference to his example, resolved to imitate his forbearance. All, therefore, in the city appeared to argue a general acquiescence in the designs of the Medici. One member, however, of the house, Francesco, the brother of Giovanni and Guglielmo, less tractable than the rest, refused to bend to the authority of Lorenzo, and to receive, through his hands, those offices which he felt himself entitled to expect from the citizens and the laws. Despairing, however, of effecting any thing

against the power which had now become sovereign in his country, he removed to Rome, where, as the acknowledged enemy of the Medici, he was chosen by Sixtus to succeed them as agents for the management of the papal treasures. At Rome he connected himself in interest with the ambitious nephew of the pope, for whose advancement the first seeds of discord had been sown between the heads of the Florentine government and the father of the church. The count Girolamo, in his frequent and unreserved intercourse with Francesco, discovered very soon the intensity of the hatred which occupied the soul of his friend ; and, uniting no less cordially, though with greater coolness, in the same enmity, he easily inspired the Florentine with hopes, which, within the walls of his native city, had seemed too faint to induce him to action. Francesco was anxious, at all hazards, to reform the government and state of Florence ; he believed, indeed, that the citizens would be willing to receive their emancipation at his hands, though they had not the energy to strike for it themselves. In this belief, he explained to Riario the necessity of securing the aid of Sixtus ; which the nephew of that prelate did not hesitate to promise him, though it was not concealed that the first act of the revolutionists, as an indispensable measure to the reform of the state, must be the assassination of the brothers who presided over its administration. The political interests which actuated Riario were too important to yield to this consideration ; and as to Francesco, it is possible that he looked upon the death of his personal enemies as a sacrifice rather than a murder, since they were at the same time the enemies of his country and the oppressors of her liberty.

It now became necessary to communicate to Sixtus the designs to which, if he could not participate in them, it was well known he would not interpose any authoritative objection. They had already found a zealous advocate in Salviati, the archbishop of Pisa.

The leader of the papal forces was at this time Giovan Battista Montesecco, a highly respectable soldier, and devoted to the interests of count Girolamo Riario. Moved by the authority of this name, Montesecco became a party to the conspiracy. He, however, had less feeling in the design; with him, the resolution to take the lives of Lorenzo and Julian, not easy in execution, appeared, if successfully executed, but the beginning of the revolution, while to the eager animosity of the others it had seemed the consummation. They now began, therefore, to discuss the manner of reducing to form the plan which had been resolved by the enthusiasm of hate, but which for its completion required the more cautious deliberations of a less headlong passion. Francesco, in this condition of the conspiracy, leaving Salviati and Riario to confer with the pope when the occasion should offer, departed for Florence to gain the concurrence and aid of the head of his house, the aged Jacopo de' Pazzi, on whose decision would depend the assistance which might be expected from the junior members of the family. Although Francesco was fully aware that his uncle participated in the detestation borne by all of his race and name to the Medici, he had expected to find him backward in undertaking any thing against their now established authority. He had thought, however, that the ease with which the end might be achieved would move the habitual coldness of the old man's disposition, augmented as it must be by the prudence and timidity of age. More backward than Francesco had expected to find him, Jacopo refused to take part in the conspiracy, and his ardent kinsman found himself under the necessity of invoking a higher authority than his own—an authority to which the caution of age would yield more willingly than to the eloquent enthusiasm of his hostility. He dispatched, therefore, a messenger to his accomplices at Rome, and besought them to obtain such sanction for their measures as should remove the scruples of Ja-

copo, and make him less reluctant to participate in a measure which they might be assured was disagreeable to him only because he was doubtful of its success.

In accordance with this demand, Montesecco was dispatched to Florence, on his way, as it was pretended, to Faenza, to secure the interests of his employer, the count Girolamo, about to be endangered in that city by the approaching and threatening dissolution of its prince. Before his departure upon this important commission, it was deemed necessary to receive the official sanction of the pope, on whom it was intended to rely for military assistance to complete the revolution of which the death of Lorenzo was to be the commencement. In the presence, therefore, of the archbishop Salviati and the count Girolamo, Montesecco was admitted to a formal audience on this subject at the palace of Sixtus. The confession of Montesecco, still extant, details the conversation which occurred at this interview. His Holiness, after being drawn to an open discussion of the contemplated proceeding, remarked that he had now an opportunity of serving the reformers by dispatching an armed force on the way to Florence, under the pretence of reducing to allegiance and punishing the disaffection of Carlo da Montone, the son of Braccio, an hereditary enemy to the papal court. "Observe, however," continued he, "that though the guilt of the Medici requires this reform, yet the nature of our holy office forbids that we counsel to the shedding of blood; wherefore, while we assent to this necessary change, we charge you that you take the life of no man in its accomplishment." It is scarcely to be supposed that this command would have been given to such a servant as Montesecco, accustomed to obey the letter of his instruction, and moved to an office foreign to his disposition, by the sovereign and sacred authority of his master, had Sixtus not anticipated the remonstrance of his nephew. The crafty prince comprehended the policy of his uncle. He therefore re-

plied, that the known aversion of his Holiness for every species of violence would undoubtedly induce his servants to act with all the moderation that the circumstance might allow, and that no other blood should be shed than such as should be indispensable for the reform of the afflicted city. As Sixtus refused a direct reply to this declaration, which was manifestly intended to operate only upon the indecision of Montcsecco, the archbishop proceeded as if in continuation, "be satisfied then, holy father, to intrust the guidance of this bark to our care, and assure yourself that we will guide it prudently and well." To which Sixtus, unwilling, from habitual craft and care, to commit himself, even before the instruments of his own designs, and willing to have all the benefit of his consent to the death of the Medici without an actual expression of acquiescence, replied, "I am satisfied that it remain in your hands."

With this understanding, the blunt but trusty soldier departed upon his errand; and, armed with the authority of the pope, and with the promise of his assistance and that of the king of Naples, he succeeded in bending the cold and unambitious uncle of the Pazzi to the designs of his nephews. To excite the less suspicion, he had been provided with credentials to Lorenzo himself, with whom he was commissioned to confer, in the name of his master, on the subject of the affairs of Faenza and Imola. But Lorenzo was no less an adept in the art of dissembling than Sixtus himself. He was not a stranger to the enmity of Rome and of all in its interest; yet he received the papal envoy in such a manner as to remove all former impressions of his hostility to the church, and to excite his admiration, in spite of the representations with which he had been armed against the insinuating treachery of the Proteus into whose court he was thus introduced. The reverence, however, with which he was accustomed to obey the orders that issued from the chair of St. Peter, overcame even the regard with which Lo-

renzo had been able to inspire him ; and Montesecco, rendered now more unfit than ever for the office, resolved to perform the duty assigned to him.

In the meantime, the execution of the plot being at last resolved upon, it was found expedient to add to the number of the conspirators. Of the Pazzi, besides Francesco, who was the animating spirit of the whole, and Jacopo, the other less conspicuous members of the family were all in a greater or less degree involved, except Rinato, who belonged to another branch of the house. Jacopo Salviati, the brother of the archbishop of Pisa, together with his cousin of the same name, was also admitted to the confidence of the little band which had undertaken to restore, from its degrading slavery, the country that did not deserve the sacrifice they were about to make for it. In addition to these auxiliaries, Giacompo, the son of the famous scholar Poggio, Antonio Maffei, a Volterran, yet exasperated by the cruelty of Lorenzo towards his native city and countryman, and Stefano Bagnoni, a priest, employed as a teacher in the family of Jacopo de' Pazzi, were considered worthy to be trusted with a knowledge of the conspiracy, and with a part in its execution ; and in the midst of the general corruption, and more especially in the servility with which the literary characters of those days inclined to the interested favours and protection of the great, it is reviving to discover a mind like that of Poggio uncontaminated, and preferring the liberty of his country and the dignity of freedom to the humiliating patronage of vulgar power. But the most important accession to the strength of the conspirators was the acquisition of Napoleone Francesi and Bernardo Bandini. The number who were now in possession of this important secret, rendered the instant execution of the design imperative ; and as it was, we cannot withhold our admiration from the fidelity with which, amid all the temptations to treachery, the par-

ties to this noble compact preserved their faith to each other.

It only now remained to dispose the aid which was to be furnished by Naples and Rome in such a manner as to secure the reform of the government on the death of the brothers, and to await or form an opportunity of dispatching both of them in the same place and at the same moment. The former purpose was effected by posting Lorenzo da Castello on the side of Sienna, and Tolentino on that of Imola; whence they were ordered to approach towards the city, that they might be in readiness to receive and execute without delay the orders of the heads of the conspiracy. The last measures were next to be concerted; and the division of that one day's duty which was to complete the restoration of the republic, or to fasten the disgrace and disaster of hereditary rule on Florence and the Florentines forever.

The young nephew of the count Girolamo had been placed in the university of Pisa, for the purpose of benefiting by the instruction of its faculty, at that time the most renowned in Italy. Here, though yet a youth in the prosecution of his studies, he had been created cardinal by his grand-uncle, whom nothing but respect for the holy office which he filled prevented the Italians from calling his grandfather. The presence of the young dignitary in Florence was now considered necessary to the accomplishment of the grand design in that city, and accordingly his coming was announced to the Medici, who, as acknowledged heads of the government, were expected to receive its guests. The moment was fast approaching for the consummation of the great undertaking. Instead of entering Florence, the cardinal was detained at a lodge belonging to the Pazzi, distant but a few miles from the city, where the brothers Julian and Lorenzo were invited to meet him. Lorenzo, with his son Piero, then a boy, accepted the invitation; but as it was deemed unsafe

to attempt the life of one only of the brothers, the blow which had been meditated for that day was deferred till the next. Those who dictated the wishes and words of young Riario, finding themselves thus frustrated in their design for that moment, prompted him to express a desire that the next day, which was Sunday, he might be present at the performance of the ceremony of high-mass in the church of Santa Reparata. He was accordingly invited by Lorenzo to enter the city for the purpose of gratifying his wish.

The evening before the day now finally destined for the accomplishment of the long-meditated plot, was spent in partitioning the labours of the morning that was to decide the fate of the conspirators, of the Medici, and of Florence. The care of dispatching Lorenzo was offered to Montesecco; but the same blind reverence which had made him willing at the command of Sixtus to enrol himself in the conspiracy, now made him shudder at the thought of violating, by the shedding of blood, the sanctity of the place which necessity compelled his accomplices to select as the altar of sacrifice. It had already been arranged that Julian should fall by the hands of Francesco de' Pazzi and the resolute Bandini. The unexpected refusal of Montesecco was therefore of the greatest detriment to the success of the plot; in the urgency of the moment, while the death of the less guilty Julian was secured by the resolution and unerring certainty of the hands to which it had been intrusted, the fate of Lorenzo was confided to the less expert and less determined arms of the Volterran Antonio Maffei and the ecclesiastic Bagnoni. The rest of the conspirators were assigned to the various duties which might be required of them, to excite the people to liberty and to awe the party of the aristocracy.

As the hour approached, when the cardinal had already ascended the pulpit, and those to whom the death of Lorenzo had been given in charge had taken

their posts, it was discovered that Julian was not yet in the church. The issue of the whole design was now at stake ; and the absence of Julian seemed to threaten the frustration of what, in the eagerness of their hopes, the conspirators had appeared to hold as already effected. Francesco and Bandini therefore hastily abandoned their places, and directed their steps towards the dwelling of the Medici, where they found their intended victim, who had resolved not to be present at the ceremony about to be performed in the cathedral church. The Pazzi and the Medici had too long been known as open enemies for either party to be deceived by any demonstration of regard on the part of the other ; yet it had been at the same time a portion of the policy of the latter to behave without any show of suspicion towards every member of the family by which their downfall would, as it was too well known, have been chronicled as a day of thanksgiving. When Francesco, therefore, and Bandini approached with the warmest manifestations of regard, and urged the necessity of Julian's presence to honour the visit of the cardinal, whether persuaded, or afraid of the suspicion of fear, he allowed himself to be led to the church. Francesco, to conceal the emotion with which his pulses trembled and his heart leaped in his breast, endeavoured to assume an air of lightness foreign to his character and his relation to the high dignitary whom he accompanied ; and Julian, not to be less in appearance unconcerned, received with courtesy the unwonted display of hilarity. A sudden thought, however, on approaching the gates of the church, possessed the mind of Francesco, and seemed in a moment to communicate itself to the heart of his colleague. If Julian, in the suspicion of danger, had prepared himself with a concealed or under mail, the first blow of their daggers intended for his destruction, and arrested in its course, would become the signal for their own. Renewing, therefore, the protestations of

pleasure at his consent to appear in the church in honour of the presence of Riario, and with other demonstrations of affection, they threw themselves one after the other about his neck, feeling the parts which they intended to strike, and assuring themselves that there was nothing to intervene between the blow of a resolute arm and the heart of the victim which they had resolved to offer up to the violated liberty of their country. A moment after they entered the church. The priest was in the act of administering the holy sacrament, and all eyes were directed to the ministering servant, when Bandini buried at a single blow his dagger in the breast of Julian, who instantly fell at his feet. The long-smothered rage of Francesco then found vent. He sprang upon the body, and long after the miserable corse had ceased to feel, continued to drive his weapon with the blindness of fury into its bleeding throat and breast. Unmoved by the confusion which prevailed around, he thus clung to the lifeless form till overcome by the loss of blood proceeding from a wound, which, in the impetuosity of his rage, he had inflicted upon himself.

The sturdier Lorenzo, however, had escaped. Unused to such an act, the hearts of Maffei and Bagnoni had not failed, but their arms had proved too weak. A slight wound, inflicted on his neck, alone bore witness that not less than his unfortunate and less unworthy brother, Lorenzo had been marked for destruction.

Bandini perceiving the escape of the greater tyrant, whose death was so much more important to the reformation of the government, abandoning Julian to the searching dagger of Francesco, resolved, if possible, to atone with his own arm for the feebleness and failure of Bagnoni and Maffei. The first who attempted to interfere was felled by his athletic arm to the earth; and Lorenzo, had he not taken shelter in the sacristy, which he barricaded within, and around which the slavish people gathered without, might have crowned

by his death the valour of Bandini, and the hopes of those few of his countrymen who valued the privileges and the glory of liberty. The terrified cardinal elung during all this time to the altar, from which the magistraey, when informed of the proceedings in the church, despatched an eseort to conduct him to the palace.

In the meanwhile, the conspirators whose duties had required their absenee from the church, and who had the task assigned to them of sceuring the Signoria, had not been more suceessful on their part. A number of Perugians, banished by the predominant faction from their native city, had been attaeched, by promises of restoration to their country, to the cause of the Pazzi. Under the conduct of Salviati, with others of the populace who had been gained for the purpose, a respectable troop proceeded to the palae of the Signoria. The greater number were ordered to remain without, and take possession of the gates when the noise within should declare that the work was begun. Salviati, accompanied by a few, then repaired to the chancery, where he left his friends, and continued to the hall in which the Signoria was assembled. This was the fatal step; for the doors of the ehancery were so constructed that it was impossible to open them on either side without the key; and Salviati, having accidentally elosed them behind him, thus made his companions prisoners in the hands of his enemies, and cut himself off from the possibility of aid. Ignorant, however, of the situation in which he had placeed himself, he proceeded to the chamber in which the Signoria were accustomed to dine, and found them assembled at the board with the Gonfalonier Petrucci at their head. This officer, accustomed to read the countenances of those with whom he was engaged, discovered, in the appearance and manner of Salviati, enough to convince him that something of moment against the government was connected with his unusual visit and strange perturbation. Leaving the

hall to confirm his suspicion by further information, he heard the cry of *Palle, Palle*, and discovered the whole city to be in commotion. The Palle or Balls were the family device in the arms of the Medici ; and the still increasing vehemence of the cry, in which that word was heard above every other, convinced the Gonfalonier that something had been attempted against the authority of Lorenzo, and that the city had risen in his behalf. Pursuing his search, he discovered Poggio, together with many others of the conspirators, separated in the manner which has been described. While the fate of those who were in the palace was thus unhappily sealed, a last effort was undertaken by the resolute Pazzi. Francesco had retired from the church, and mounting on horseback, intended to ride through the city with his little band and invite the citizens to join with him and with his friends in the vindication of their liberty. Unable, however, from the severity of the wound which he had inflicted on himself, to keep his seat, he sent to urge his uncle Giacopo without delay to take his place and summon the people. That which the enthusiasm of Francesco might have obtained, the coldness of Giacopo's character was almost sure to prevent. As the old man rode through the streets he was saluted by the curses of the rabble, and every window and house-top showered down stones and other missiles upon the head of the unsuccessful conspirator. A little more energy on the part of Maffei and Bagnoli would have made him, in the eyes of the same populace, a hero and a deliverer ; and many who wished that success to his cause which it was now the crime of himself and his colleagues not to have achieved, were drawn by a selfish fear to join in the slavish zeal of the adherents and purchased advocates of the Medici. Thus abandoned by the people, or seeing rather the people thus abandoned by themselves, he turned disgusted from the enterprise, and, passing through the gates of the city, prepared to

secure his safety by voluntary banishment from his ungrateful and degraded country.

On this failure of the conspiracy, all Florence seemed solicitous to manifest the interest which she took in the safety of her tyrant ; and in proportion as each individual thus hoped to gain the favour of Lorenzo, he was loud and furious in his denunciations of those who had participated in, or been privy to, the murder of Julian. Salviati and Poggio were hung without a hearing at the windows of the palace of the Signoria, and the limbs of many of less note were carried on pikes to glut the savage revenge of the survivor. Against the Pazzi, however, the servile fury of the mob was more particularly directed. Their houses were burned or beaten to the ground ; and all who bore the name, whether participators in the conspiracy or not, were designated as proper objects of public execration. Even Rinato, though he had opposed the whole design, was sentenced to death, and hung beside the aged Giacompo, who had been arrested in his flight and re-conducted to Florence. Francesco was dragged from his bed to the scaffold, but his deportment in that moment took half their triumph from his enemies. Disdaining to complain, he also despised too much the miserable rabble who had once been citizens, to address a word of justification or of exhortation to their ears. He did not loudly glory in his attempt, because he would not speak to his fallen countrymen the noble language of the high feeling which they had ceased to exhibit ; and with a manner that indicated a mind removed from the scene of which he formed a part, and the time to which in a moment he was to cease to belong, he submitted himself to the executioner. Of the whole number that accompanied Salviati to the palace, one individual alone survived the day of the conspiracy ; but the ferocity of Lorenzo remained still unsated ; and all the blood poured out as an offering to his pride, was insufficient to console him for the escape

of Bandini, who lived to boast that had the life of Lorenzo been placed in his hands, he would not have survived his far less guilty brother to embrue his hands in the generous blood of the Pazzi. No show or act of servility was now too great for the Florentines ; and when they could no longer pamper their master with blood, they still found means, in their officious baseness, to minister to his revenge and to his outraged vanity, by violating the sanctity of the grave, and tearing from its quiet repose the mangled body of him who had taught them the vulnerability and the mortality of their oppressors.

“ To stigmatize the remembrance of this conspiracy, therefore, with some peculiar mark of infamy, Giacompo de’ Pazzi, who at first had been buried in a vault where his ancestors lay interred, was pulled out of that grave and tumbled into a hole without the walls of the city as if he had been excommunicated : out of which his body was taken up a second time, and dragged naked through the city in the halter with which he had been hanged : and as the persons that had treated him in this manner did not think his bones worthy of being suffered to rest upon the land, they at last threw him into the Arno, upon which there was at that time a great flood. A terrible example indeed of the instability of fortune ! to see a man of his great opulence and authority, and in the full enjoyment of every blessing, thus suddenly thrown headlong from such a height of prosperity, into the lowest abyss of misery and ignominy. He was said to have been guilty of many vices, particularly of gaming and swearing, and that to a degree beyond the greatest reprobates of his time : but, on the other hand, he had some good qualities ; for he was exceeding charitable to the poor, and bountiful to religious houses. It should likewise be mentioned to his commendation, that the day before this plot was to be put in execution, he paid all his debts, and consigned all the merchandizes belonging

to the other people, which he had either in the custom-house or in his own possession, to their right owners, with the greatest care and exactness imaginable ; that so nobody might partake of his misfortunes if he miscarried in the attempt."*

On this unhappy termination of the conspiracy, the armies of the pope, under the command of Tolentino and Lorenzo da Castello, retired towards the limits of the ecclesiastical state ; and the fate of the Medici triumphed over the intrigues and the arms of the church, now for the first time in many centuries displayed in the cause of freedom and justice.

Yet Sixtus resolved to make another effort still to detach from the love of their tyrant the people who had so long presented the spectacle of a free government and faithful laws and incorruptible magistrates, to the world, which admired, but had not the strength to emulate, their virtue. He called them to the contemplation of their former freedom, and charging upon Lorenzo the crimes of which the citizens had for his sake been guilty towards the church, he fulminated against him the curse of its sovereign-head in denunciations of temporal and spiritual perdition. He was unwilling to depend, however, upon these arms alone ; for though the throne of the pontiffs had been for years assuming a more regal character than had belonged to it even in the days of Gregory and Boniface, it was not to be disguised that the voice with which its occupant spoke to the consciences of men was day by day decreasing in power ; and that the spiritual strength was failing in exact proportion as the ambitious prelate was anxious to sustain it by physical force, and by the ordinary engines of national and political power. Still, however, the effect of the interdict of the city, and the excommunication of Lorenzo, might be fatal in their effects to his authority ; the populace, which, for

* Farneworth's Macchiavelli.

his sake, had not recoiled from the commission of a murder that, even in the more enlightened age of the Medici, might seem to superadd the crime of sacrilege, would possibly shrink from the endurance of its penalty, and sacrifice to their own impunity the object of papal displeasure and ecclesiastical hate in the person of their favourite.

Lorenzo himself appeared to be not entirely without apprehension ; and when he heard himself charged as the sole author of a war, in which the influence of the church and the strength of Naples were to be combined against his country, he felt that he could not justly complain if he should find that country preserving her own safety, and preferring her preservation to the advancement of his house and fortunes. He therefore resolved to encounter the storm in its weakness, rather than abide the discharge of its collected fury ; and, summoning the citizens to an open conference, he proceeded to justify himself and the conduct of his ancestors. His speech was artfully contrived to win the favour on a breath of which the future fortunes of his life were staked. After returning thanks to them for the ardour with which they had defended his person and revenged the death of his brother, he continued : “ Consider, I beseech you, illustrious citizens, the melancholy situation to which the malevolence of fortune had reduced us, when we were not secure in our own houses, amongst our friends and relations, nor even in the house of God itself. Those that are in fear or distress have always recourse to their kindred and acquaintance for protection ; but we had the misfortune to find our nearest friends and allies ready armed for our destruction. Such as are persecuted either by public or private rage usually find an asylum in the church : but places that afford refuge to all others, were marked out and destined for our utter extinction : and where even parricides and assassins meet with shelter, the Medici were doomed to be murdered. The

Almighty, however, who never abandoned our family in times past, is graciously pleased to preserve it at present, and has taken upon himself to vindicate the justice of our cause: for what injury have we ever done to any man, that could inflame him with so diabolical a thirst of revenge? we never offended those, in any respect, either publicly or privately, who lately shewed so inveterate and particular an enmity against us: for if we had been so disposed, we could long ago have put it out of their power to hurt us. If they complain of any hardships they have received from the public, as owing to our influence (in case they have really met with such, which I declare I know nothing of) that ought to be considered as an insult upon the majesty of this palace and the government in general, rather than an affront to our family in particular; since it would be plainly and directly accusing you of being our creatures, and ready at any time to oppress your fellow-citizens at our instigation or command: an imputation than which nothing can be more false. If it was jealousy, or envy, or fear of our authority, that prompted them to such a deed, their proceedings were not so properly a reflection upon us, as yourselves who conferred it upon us. Power, indeed, usurped by violence, naturally and justly inspires mankind with apprehension; but surely there is nothing to be dreaded from a person to whom it is freely given by others as a reward for a long and uninterrupted course of liberality and good actions. Ye very well know, illustrious citizens, that none of my ancestors ever arrived at any degree of greatness or honour, which they were not in a manner forced to accept, by the concurrent desire and importunity of yourselves and the Signory. My grandfather Cosimo did not seek to return from banishment by violence and force of arms, but came back with the general consent and invitation of the whole city. My father, when grown old and infirm, and not in a capacity to defend the state against so

many enemies, was yet sufficiently supported by your authority and benevolence : and I myself, who was but a child in a manner when he died, could not, by any means, have maintained the dignity of our family, if I had not been assisted by your favour and counsel : and certain it is, that none of us ever have been, or ever will be, able to govern this republic without your countenance and co-operation. But let us suppose we had injured them in the most grievous manner, and that they had sufficient reason to seek our ruin. Yet what have the Signory done to offend them ? why did they insult the palace ? what could induce them to enter into a confederacy with the pope, and the king of Naples, to subvert the constitution and liberties of their country ? what motives could tempt or provoke them to disturb the tranquillity which Italy had so long enjoyed ? There might, indeed, have been some appearance of justice, in endeavouring to revenge themselves upon people that had done them any injury : but why should the public be involved in private quarrels and resentments ? For these proceedings there can be no excuse. From hence it comes to pass, that we are threatened with these dangers, though the persons that brought them upon us are extinct. To their instigations it is owing that we are now invaded by the pope and the king of Naples, who pretend, truly, that it is only against me and my family that they have engaged in this war ; and I heartily wish that was true ; for then there would be a speedy and certain remedy to be found ; as I am not so bad a citizen as to prefer my own private welfare to that of the public : on the contrary, I would presently extinguish the flame, though I perished in it myself. But as it is generally the custom of powerful and ambitious princes to varnish over the injustice of their wicked designs with some fair and plausible pretence, they have taken this method at present, to excite your resentment against me : and if you think I deserve it,

venerable fathers and illustrious citizens, I am in your hands, and ready to be disposed of entirely according to your wisdom. You are my parents and protectors; whatsoever you command, I shall always obey, not only with cheerfulness, but with joy; and if it be your pleasure, I will willingly be the victim that shall put an end to a war which has begun with the sacrifice of my brother."*

In connexion with the interdict and excommunication, Sixtus had directed a brief to the magistracy of Florence—to this it was now resolved to reply. For this purpose a synod was convened in the city, in which a refutation of the charges contained in the brief were prepared, with a vindication of the right of resistance to the interdict. In conformity with the resolutions of this convention, the Signoria addressed an answer of justification to the pope, in which they reminded him that the delegated authority which characterized his holy office had not been intrusted to him as an instrument of bloodshed and treachery; that notwithstanding the share which he was known to have taken in the conspiracy, the life of his nephew had been held sacred, and his person restored to liberty; and that it was more becoming his character as a Christian minister and apostolic vicegerent, to assemble the princes of Europe for the defence of the faith against the Turkish encroachments, than to engage in the excitement of Christians against their Christian brethren.†

* Farnsworth's Macchiavelli.

† "Artes sunt istæ Pontificiæ Majestatis dignæ, et Vicariatus Christi? Movet te fortassè, et de ea re Laurentium succenses, quod e furentibus populi armis Raphaelem Cardinalem, tuum nepotem cripi curaverit, et saluum reddiderit! movet, quod, trucidato Juliano fratre, saucius ipse, divina potius, quam humana aliqua spe, sceleratos gladios sacrilegosque parricidarum, et mortem evitaverit! Si cædi se passus sit ab missis a vobis cfferatissimis satellitibus; si Arcem libertatis nostræ, publicum Palatium captum dolis à proditoribus vestris, non recuperassemus; si trucidandos Nosmet, ac Magistratus nostros, et cives tradidissemus vobis; nihil modo tecum contentionis haberemus.

This general note of preparation on either side sufficiently indicated the coming contest, and Frederic d'Urbino, at the head of the papal and Calabrian forces, entered the territory on the side of Siena. The duke of Ferrara was, on the other hand, elected captain-general of the Florentine forces, and though unequal in numbers, assumed the defensive with a great deal of vigour. The aid which the duke of Milan had been expected to furnish, was greatly diminished by the successful efforts of the court of Naples to excite the people of Genoa against the government of the Milanese. To this diminution of the means of resistance was added another on the side of the Florentines, which nothing but a thorough acquaintance with the character of Sixtus could have led them to anticipate. From

“Sed ut ad alteram descendamus causam; quomodo talis aliquis civis publico est, ut scribis, bono adversatus? Aliæ causæ sunt, quæ arma Christiana movent contra Christianos, et defensionem Religionis, atque expeditionem in Turchos impediunt, ut, aliàs quoque, Imperatorem, Ratisbonæ, eam procurantem impediunt, in quam tamen nos publice longas naves, et tibi, et Ferdinando Regi, complures dono dedimus; et, Cosmus, Laurenti avus, superscriptus, suis privatis sumptibus, Summo Pontifici unam perpulchrè armatam est clargitus; præterea, magnam pecuniarum vim, ut pro viribus laboranti Religioni nostræ succurreremus, dum Laurentius de Medicis in urbe esset, subministravimus; et juvimus 20 florenorum millibus Ferdinandum Regem, quem modò fama fert, et legatis, et muneribus conciliare sibi Religionis Christianæ publicum hostem, et qui, cum te conjunctus, modo Christianis bellum infert, dum in limine Italiæ superbissimus ille victoriosissimusque insultat. Juvimus etiam, hortatu tuo, Matthiam Hungariæ Regem; et, qui sunt nobiscum fædere conjunctissimi, Venetis non defuimus. Ad quem multò hæc magis pertinent, pluraque majoraque non fecit; et tamen hanc causam asseris cur bellum inferas: et ita omnia jura humana divinaque confundas! Sed alia profecto, alia causa est, quæ armat te contra Christianos, et quidem istius Sacrosanctæ Sedis, in qua Vicarium Christi sedere jam oportet, præcipuos perpetuosque cultores. Ex quo in ista sede es, quid arma tua, quid signa Pontificalia, quid Pedum istud Beati Petri, quid navicula egerit, heu! nimis notum est: quæ profecto, quis sit is qui publico adversetur bono, heu! nimium declarant.

“Indue, indue, Beatissime Pater, meliorem mentem; memineris pastoralis officii tui, et Vicariatus Christi; memineris clavium non in istos usus datarum. Quam enim veremur, ne in nostra tempora illud incidat dictum Evangelicum: ‘malos male perdet, et vineam suam locabit aliis agricolis!’”—*Pignotti*.

Venice the Medici had a right to expect substantial assistance ; but the Venetians had a persevering enemy beyond the Alps, whose advances seemed to threaten more fatal consequences to their state than any change in the Cisalpine governments could possibly involve. The great protection of Venice on this side and against this pressing danger, was the intervening realm of the king of Hungary ; to the resolution with which that monarch should oppose the incursions of the ferocious enemy, the Venetians now looked with a breathless anxiety ; and when Sixtus, who was supposed to be the natural foe of Mahomet, had united in the attempt to open that passage to the incursions of the Turks ; when, at his intercession, the barriers which separated the rich commercial states of Christendom from the greedy rapacity of the Mohammedans were removed, and the wild hordes of Tartars poured through the gap upon the outskirts of Italy ; all Europe stood aghast, and learned to comprehend the character of him whom she had placed at the head of her spiritual government, the protector of her religion and the interpreter of its law. Under these circumstances, it was no longer possible to look for aid to Venice, when the Friuli was invaded by a desolating band of fifteen thousand of the soldiers of Mahomet. The first campaign was therefore disastrous to Florence, which had scarcely been consoled for numerous and important losses by a single victory.

On the approach of winter, and during the cessation of hostilities occasioned by the advance of that season, attempts were made to reconcile the differences which had provoked the war ; but the return of spring found both parties again in the field with added or recovered confidence. After a succession of unimportant actions, a decisive encounter took place between the forces of the Florentines, under Roberto Malatesta, and the papal army near Perugia. The battle-field was by the Thrasimenean lake ; and the memory of ancient

deeds achieved upon that spot, appeared to animate the combatants with a spirit unknown to the battles of those days. Having gained in this contest a decided victory, the Florentine general indulged in the most sanguine expectation of the fall of Perugia, which would probably have terminated the campaign; but a reverse upon the other side of the seat of war even more than counterpoised this advantage.

At the opening of the season the Florentines had been reinforced by the contributions of Venice, which, having concluded a peace with the Turks, had transferred to Florence the services of the able general Carlo da Montone. While the division under the duke of Ferrara was on its way between San Geminiano and Colli, in anticipation of a meeting with the army of the duke of Calabria, Carlo da Montone had been despatched towards Perugia, in the hope that the remains of his father's party in that city might render its reduction little less than a certain conquest. Carlo had died unexpectedly on his march, and the conduct of his troops had been conferred upon Malatesta, who immediately afterwards became victorious at Thrasimene. The duke of Ferrara had suffered himself in the preceding season to be suspected of disaffection to the cause which he sustained, and his command was now divided with Deifobo dell' Anguillara. Availing himself of a difference with his colleague, while the Calabrian general was marching towards them with his troops, the discontented duke withdrew his forces and retired from the field. Discouraged by this defection, though still superior in numerical strength, the army under Anguillara but waited to hear of the approach of the enemy, and flying from the field, on which they abandoned their baggage, their artillery, and all their munitions of war, they rushed back upon Florence, collecting in their flight the terrified population of towns, villages, and country, which appeared at the gates of the capital, and with tidings of defeat and

destruction besought a shelter in her walls. Nothing now appeared to interpose for the protection of the city, which, defenceless in consequence of the troops that she had furnished for the armies of the duke of Ferrara and Malatesta, could scarcely have been able to man her walls or to defend her gates. The enemy, however, dwelt at Poggibonzi, which communicated its name to this victory, to divide and to squander the gains of its too easy conquest ; and Malatesta, recalled from the enterprize of Perugia, had time to place himself between the city, with its panic-stricken inhabitants, and the march of its victorious enemy.

This important action, therefore, which might have decided the fate not only of this war, but, perhaps, of the Florentine government, produced no other result than a temporary despondency on the part of the vanquished, and an honourable, but certainly not expedient, retirement into winter-quarters on the side of the victors. What seems to render this conduct more unaccountable was the revolution in Milan, which, placing the celebrated Ludovico, called by the Italians *il Moro*, upon the ducal throne, deprived the Florentines of the most valuable aid on which they had relied during their preceding campaigns. Whatever might be the motive of the Neapolitan and papal cabinets, there was every reason to induce the Florentines, when the herald of the duke of Calabria offered a truce, to accede without hesitation to the proposal. With some prospect of peace, both parties now prepared to remedy the ills and the ravages of war, by attending to those interests which the excitement, the expenses, and the dangers of military undertakings are too apt to expose to neglect.

In the time of Cosimo we have seen the Florentines enduring an oppressive war while the enemy was in the field, and only complaining when, on a cessation of hostilities, they were called to calculate the pecuniary cost of their military equipments. In the present in

stance the same posture of affairs presented a similar excitement in the public mind, when the account of the expenses of the city were to be estimated as increased by the war in which her magistrates had kept her engaged. Now, moreover, the arms of the republic, and that party by which they had been assumed, had nothing to offer as an equivalent for pecuniary loss. Defeat had followed defeat, and a single victory had produced results scarcely less to be deplored. All this had been endured by Florence, not that she might be great, not for commercial or political advancement of her citizens, but that the Medici might still continue at the head of her government. Even the personal friends of Lorenzo began to tire of his expensive friendship, and to desire some diminution of the burthens which it entailed. The citizens were terrified; the only feeling which, in the decay of their ancient character, could nerve them to the energy of revolt, had taken possession of their bosoms, and the fear which governed now their minds, seemed more alarming to Lorenzo than all the swords of Naples and all the spiritual missives of the Vatican; he no longer presented the bold front of fearless tyranny, but acknowledged that, even under the basest of excited passions, the power of the people was terrible. When he looked beyond the limits of the republic, and those limits were daily contracting by the encroachments of its enemies, he saw no hope. In Tuscany, Lucca was not friendly to the city over which he presided, and Sienna was her open enemy. Milan, her long and faithful ally, the defender of all her quarrels, had gone over to her enemy; even Venice rejoiced not so secretly over her misfortunes that her joy was concealed from the desponding Florentines; and the two greatest powers next to this, her treacherous and lukewarm friend in Italy, were threatening the renewal of a desolating contest with the return of spring. Lorenzo beheld and fully comprehended this crisis of his fortunes, and his resolution

was equal to the emergency. While his enemies, and those indifferent to his interests or friends of his prosperity, were clamouring aloud against the burthens which the support of his ambition brought on them ; and while his real friends and his partizans were relaxing in the earnestness of his justification, or falling away from his cause, he departed suddenly from the city. Soderini and a few of his trusted counsellors were alone privy to his design. From San Miniato he addressed a letter to the Signoria, full of obsequious protestations of fidelity to the government and love for the citizens, and declaring that he had resolved to visit the king of Naples in person, to detach him, if possible, from the friendship of the pope.

This was a hazardous undertaking. Ferdinand was confessedly, perhaps, the most faithless monarch of his day ; and the death of Piccinino and others, who, upon the engagement of his word, had placed themselves in his power, might have deterred a cautious politician like Lorenzo from exposing himself to the treachery of a prince so notorious for the violation of every principle, and so little regardful of the observance of private morals and of public right. The importance of the possession of Lorenzo's person to the ambition of this unprincipled sovereign is sufficiently explained by the part which he had borne in the conspiracy of the Pazzi, and by the part he was now bearing in a doubtful and expensive war, with the sole and acknowledged view to the removal of Lorenzo from the guidance of the Florentine government. This generous self-devotion of their favourite recovered all the popularity which he had lost ; the Signoria invested him with all the rights and all the dignity of ambassador of the nominal republic. Even this protection did not satisfy the anxious love of the citizens ; and when they beheld him return from his perilous errand, bringing peace and safety to their country, with a restoration of the happy calm in which their city had

risen to wealth, and which alone could sustain her industry and her commerce, they could not sufficiently testify their admiration of his intrepidity, and the gratitude which overwhelmed them for this exercise of his talent in their behalf. They might, however, have been less clamorous in their wonder and their love, if they had known the circumstances with which he himself was well acquainted before he ventured his person at the court of Ferdinand.

Lorenzo had not exposed himself without a previous understanding of the desires of the Neapolitan court, or at least of its ministers ; he had been in treaty before his departure with the son-in-law of the king, and he might have learned from him that the allies of Ferdinand, grown weary of the contest and wavering in their support, had rendered an honourable peace an object of some importance even to the victorious prince. Before his departure, moreover, Lorenzo may have made a profitable use of his reputation for magnificence and liberality, which was not a less recommendation to the ministers of Ferdinand than to his own partizans at home ; it had purchased the liberties of Florence, and we should wonder, indeed, if it were not tried, or, if being tried, it had failed in the cabinet of a treacherous king, or among the satellites of a depraved court. Whatever doubt may involve this part of Lorenzo's conduct, if he neglected so obvious and so powerful a means of preparing his way, or indeed of assuring his personal safety and securing his end, he certainly was not sparing in its use on his arrival at the capital of his long relentless enemy. Three months he remained the guest of the most faithless prince of his day, and among a people the least regardful of moral principle in Italy ; yet in all that period he had no reason to believe that a single design had been conceived against his person, his liberty, or his life.

The peace which Lorenzo obtained by this visit to Naples, was neither onerous nor dishonourable in its

conditions. It provided, however, for the release of such of the Pazzi as, not having been executed at the moment of the failure of their conspiracy, had been cast into prison ; and this was possibly the most galling to the pride of Lorenzo, though to Florence it can scarcely have appeared worthy to be named as a condition of peace. Venice, the ally of Florence, and Rome, the partner of Naples in the undertaking against the Medici, could not be otherwise than dissatisfied with a treaty formed in this manner without their knowledge, and with an actual and undisguised barter of their interests ; a new league was therefore the consequence, founded upon the temporary interests of individual ambition, or on the still more less stable basis of personal feeling.

The animosity which gave birth to this unexpected union and league might have been productive of most unfortunate results to the peace of the Peninsula, and to the commercial prosperity which may now be said to be the only prosperity that it was permitted to enjoy. But in the midst of hostile preparation, the news of the arrival of a powerful Turkish force on the shores of Italy ; the cry of the butchered inhabitants of Otranto, which rung in the ears of their affrighted neighbours, and seemed the precursor of a general devastation and slaughter ; the preparation of Sixtus to abandon the children of his care, and once again transfer the holy seat to Avignon ; the universal consternation, in a word, which the now acknowledged resolution of the Mohammedans to crush the Christian church spread over Christendom—all tended to extinguish those feelings of irritation, under the influence of which the Italians had been enlisted on different sides for a sectional war. It is possible that the panic with which the news of this descent upon their coasts had impressed the governments no less than the people of Italy, would have been terribly justified had it not been almost instantaneously followed by the intelligence of

Mahomet's death. He had been already the conqueror of two empires; he had subjugated twelve kingdoms, and added to his own, thus founded, no less than two hundred cities; the Italians were not, therefore, without reason alarmed at the disembarkation of his savage troops upon their shores; and the general burst of joy which rose from all their cities at the news of his death—the public rejoicings and the official thanksgivings instituted in commemoration of that event, declare how justly he was entitled to the epithet of *the Great*, according to the usage which bestows that name alone upon the scourges of mankind, and which none since the day of the *mighty hunter* had more ruthlessly earned. It is not, perhaps, generally known, that the origin of the title by which the sultans of Constantinople are still designated, is derived from its application to Mahomet II., and that the designation of The Great Turk was first bestowed by the admiration of his subjects and the terror of Europe upon this conqueror. On his decease, the leader of his soldiers in Italy abandoned their conquests in that country, and released its various populations from the well-grounded fear of another barbarian subjugation.

In the midst of his career of conquest, Mahomet had, however, become acquainted with the name and character of Lorenzo de' Medici. The less ferocious means adopted by him for the establishment of his rule and the extension of his power, had not deprived him of the esteem of the Turkish prince, with whom his ambition most probably greatly exalted him; and his long-eluded vengeance was at last to owe its gratification to the friendship of this general enemy of his country, his countryman, and his religion. Bandini, after escaping from Florence and from Italy, on the failure of the conspiracy of the Pazzi, had taken refuge in Constantinople. Here, by order of the sultan, he was seized, and placed in the hands of those to whom his death would be scarcely less welcome than a kingdom

gained. The death of Julian was thus revenged ; and Bandini, who had united with the bold and noble race of the Pazzi for the recovery of the Florentine liberty, was not separated from them in the manner of his death. He was executed at Florence by the officious satellites of Lorenzo, while that wily politician was playing the part of ambassador of the Florentine Signoria at Naples.

The death of Mahomet, and the treaty of Lorenzo with the king of Naples, left nothing now to be desired in Italy for a general pacification except the reconciliation of the latter with the pope. Circumstances rendered this no longer a difficulty, and the ambassadors of the same Signoria which had but a short time before denied the papal right, and read a homily upon religion and morality to the pope, now prostrated themselves at his feet, and received as an act of mercy the formal pardon which he was no less anxious to extend than they were solicitous to receive. Such was the solemn farce which the dignity of the church and the majesty of Lorenzo required ; and such the end for which Naples, Rome, and Milan, the cities of Tuscany, and the senate of Venice, had been content to risk the lives of thousands, and to sacrifice all those important interests which require the uninterrupted industry of peace. It would be difficult to find, during the era of the true republics, a parallel for such a war and such a peace, however it may be the custom and the interest of venal writers to point to that epoch for evidence of the turbulence and jealousies of republicanism as established during the middle ages in Italy. The various conquests of this unprincipled war were restored on either side ; and, with the exception of the loss of life and treasure, all things were put in the condition in which they had stood before the commencement of hostilities. Upon the failure of the well-concerted conspiracy of Riario, the pope, the king of Naples, the archbishop of Pisa, and the noble family of the Pazzi,

against the usurped dominion of the Medici in Florence, when it became apparent that the hopes of that combination had been foiled through the carelessness of those alone for whose benefit it had been formed, we almost lose the power of sympathising with the few who might from time to time be stung to the resolution of attempting yet once again the fortune of another scheme, as it cannot be doubted that each abortive effort but fastened now with double strength the fitted yoke.

Battista Frescobaldi had been Florentine consul at Constantinople during part of the reign of Mahomet, and, as such, had been the instrument of transmitting the person of Bandini to his government. In this unhappy office, we observe no evidence of reluctance on the part of Frescobaldi to the performance of the duty which consigned his heroic prisoner into the hands of his executioner ; yet scarcely do we find him in Florence before we discover him, in his turn, at the head of a conspiracy for the assassination of Lorenzo and the overthrow of his rule. The failure of his plan produced, as he should have anticipated, the ruin of his few imprudent friends, with additional conviction to the citizens of the fitness and necessity of Lorenzo's government.

The brief moment of Italy's peace, which had been a moment of terror and disgraceful consternation, was again to be succeeded by internal wars. The league of Venice and the church, rendered vain as to the purposes for which it had been formed, by the removal of the interdict from Florence and the temporary reconciliation of Lorenzo, was yet to bring forth its fruits. The little state of the duke of Ferrara opened to both a new promise of advantage and aggrandizement. To the pope it was desirable as a permanent dominion for the count Riario, whose territories were now altogether unequal to his uncle's ambition ; and to Venice it held out the invitation to territorial gain, the constantly

coveted object of her desires, limited as she was by nature to her marshes and her canals. Uncertain, then, to which side the spoil should belong, both parties were willing to defer the adjustment of that question till they should have obtained possession of the prize. On this occasion it is easy to observe that the cunning of Venice had over-reached the eager ambition of Sixtus, for she indeed had little to apprehend from Riario on the death of his uncle, which age and infirmity rendered imminent; while he on his side had every thing to fear from their unhesitating greediness of empire, when the election of a new pontiff should take from him the protection of the papal authority.

Historians of that period dwell at length upon the pomp with which Riario himself was received by the grave senators of the crafty aristocracy; nor, as a modern author observes, is the account of it useless among the records of the times, as indicating the intercourse of pride and vanity which had succeeded and superseded the simple communication of popular magistrates during the republican eras. The war of conquest was now formally declared against the petty prince who governed as sovereign, with the common and favourite title of duke, the little city and state of Ferrara. But insignificant as this dominion might be in itself, it became of paramount importance in the eyes of the Florentines as an appendage to the empire of the Venetian senate or to the states of the church. Florence, therefore, publicly and instantly declared herself the ally of the former general of her forces; and by virtue of their recent treaty, Naples and Milan took part on the same side in the quarrel. The duke of Calabria now marched into the territory of Sixtus, and for a moment every thing appeared to threaten the ruin of the papal cause. Venice, however, despatched to the aid of her ally a reinforcement in the person of her leader Roberto Malatesta, who easily retrieved

her affairs and enabled her to assume the offensive against her enemies in the South.

The career of victory, which it is possible Malatesta might have pursued against the duke of Calabria in the territory of the king of Naples, was cut short by his premature death, occasioned by his imprudence after the battle of Velletri, in which he had entirely routed the enemies' forces. Having exerted and greatly heated himself in the action, he swallowed large draughts of water, which, bringing on a violent dysentery, occasioned his death. It was expected that Sixtus and the Roman court would manifest a heartfelt regret at the loss of so excellent and successful a defender of their cause; but Malatesta was himself, as well as the duke of Ferrara, the possessor of a territory and dominion coveted by the inordinate desires of the sovereign pontiff; and not even the outward show of sorrow appeared to counteract the common suspicion that Malatesta had been unfairly dealt with by those whom he had rescued from ruin, for his inheritance of Rimini. Among the most remarkable incidents of that age, the consequences of the death of this illustrious leader were not the least singular; but they are, moreover, of infinite importance to the reader of history, as strikingly indicative of the degraded state of public morals and national faith. The Florentines, whose allies had been disgracefully beaten by the valour and skill of Malatesta, were compelled upon his death to send a guard from their own forces to protect his wife and son in the dominion which he had left to them—to save them from the grasp of the unprincipled ecclesiastic, whose defence he had assumed and in whose service he had died. So eager, indeed, was the joy of Sixtus, even while celebrating the obsequies of his fallen soldier, that not the respect which the papal character extorted from those who lived within the pale of the church, was strong enough to curb the suspicion that Malatesta had been the victim of his cm-

ployer's want of faith, or prevent the loud and frequent expression of this injurious suspicion.

In the meantime the armies of Venice closely invested Ferrara; and while the forces of the church were giving employment to the arms of Naples and Florence, the Ferrarese, abandoned to contend with the unequal power of the Venetians, were about to yield to their resistless attack. At this moment Sixtus opened his eyes to the idleness of the hope by which he had been cajoled into this unprofitable war. He perceived his own inevitable loss, and he comprehended the equally inevitable gain of Venice, with which the church had never been united but in temporary league; and which, indeed, had always been numbered among the least subservient to its interest and obedient to its will.

We are now about to take leave of our chief authority, in the examination of the contemporary writers upon whom we have relied in the foregoing portions of our history. In all discrepancies, whether in matters of opinion or of fact, where other writers have differed, the penetrating mind of Macchiavelli has enabled us to arrive at such conclusions as have seemed, with the assistance of his knowledge, little less than inevitable. We have followed him, therefore, with care, to that portion of his history in which he abandons the task of chronicling his country's shame, and we shall hardly find his equal as a guide in the portion that remains to us still. In presenting the reader, therefore, with an outline of the new condition of affairs in the Italian peninsula—of the new interests which formed new leagues, and gave origin to new wars and to new combinations, we shall avail ourselves of a comprehensive extract from the last book of his History of Florence.

It has already been observed, that many reasons had been pressed upon Sixtus to cause him, however without a pretence, to abandon his unnatural connexion

with the senate of Venice : " Whilst these things were in agitation at Rome and in Romagna, the affairs of the marquis of Ferrara began to have a bad aspect, and the Venetians daily conceived greater hopes of stripping him of his dominions. On the other hand, the king of Naples and the Florentines used their utmost endeavours to reduce the pope to reason ; but not being able to effect that by dint of arms, they threatened him with a general council, which already had been summoned by the emperor to assemble at Basil. This determined his Holiness to come to an accommodation with the league : for which purpose he sent a nuncio to Naples, where a confederacy was concluded for five years betwixt the pope, king Ferdinand, and the duke of Milan, with liberty for the Venetians to join in it within a certain time if they pleased. After he had proceeded thus far, he sent to give the Venetians to understand that they must desist from hostilities against the Ferrarese : but they were so far from complying with these dictates, that they began to make preparations for continuing the war with greater vigour ; and having defeated the combined forces of the duke and the marquis in an action near Argenta, they advanced so near to Ferrara that their army encamped in a park belonging to the marquis, and almost under the walls of the city. The league therefore resolved to trifle no longer, but to send effectual supplies to the assistance of that prince, and accordingly gave orders to the duke of Calabria to march directly with the army under his command, in conjunction with the pope's, towards Ferrara. The Florentines likewise sent all their forces to his succour : and to settle the future operations of the war, the league appointed a congress of their several ministers to be held at Cremona : in consequence of which, a legate from the pope, count Girolamo, the duke of Calabria, Ludovico Sforza, Lorenzo de' Medici, and several other Italian princes, assembled at that city, in order to

concert proper measures for their conduct in the ensuing campaign.

"The Venetians, seeing all Italy thus confederated against them, took the duke of Reno, with two hundred cuirassiers or heavy-armed horse that were under his command, into their service, in order to put a little better face upon their affairs: and having received news that their fleet was dispersed, they sent this commander with one part of their army to face the enemy, whilst San Severino passed the Adda with the other and marched towards Milan, in favour, as he pretended, of the young duke and his mother Madonna Bona; but really in hopes of raising an insurrection there by these means: as he thought Ludovico's manner of governing had made him odious to the people. This invasion, at first, threw the citizens of Milan into such consternation that they all took up arms; but in the end produced an effect very different from what the Venetians expected: for it determined Ludovico to comply with what he had before so obstinately refused, and to grant the forces of the allies a passage through the Milanese: so that the confederates succeeded in almost all their undertakings during the summer of this year.

"The ensuing winter having passed without any event worthy of relation, both armies took the field again early in the spring; and the confederates had drawn all their forces together, with a resolution to strike some bold and sudden stroke that should put an end to the war: and if things had been conducted with the same prudence that they were the year before, they would certainly have stripped the Venetians of all their dominions in Lombardy. But as it generally happens, where there are several commanders of equal power in the same army, that dissensions arise amongst them, to their own prejudice and the great advantage of the enemy, so it fell out at this time; for after the death of Frederic Gonzaga, marquis of Mantua, great

animosities and jealousies ensued betwixt the duke of Calabria and Ludovico Sforza, who had been kept in good friendship and harmony together, by his authority, whilst he lived. Giovanni Galeazzo, duke of Milan, was now of age to take the reins of government into his own hands, and as he had married the duke of Calabria's daughter, that prince was desirous that his son-in-law should oblige his uncle Ludovico to lay down his authority, and take the administration of the state upon himself: but Ludovico, perceiving his design, resolved, if possible, to prevent it.

"The Venetians being aware of these suspicions in Ludovico, determined to make their advantage of them, hoping they should be able to gain more by a peace (as they always had done) than they had lost in the war. With this view, they privately made some overtures to Ludovico, and at last concluded a treaty with him in August 1484: of which his confederates being soon informed, were not a little mortified at it; especially when they found they should be obliged to restore all the towns they had taken from the Venetians, and that the latter would not only remain in possession of the Polesine of Rovigo, which they had wrested out of the marquis of Ferrara's hands, but of all the pre-eminence and authority which they formerly had over the city of Ferrara itself. To these conditions, however, they were forced to submit, as they grew tired of the burden of the war, and did not care to tempt fortune any further, lest they should expose themselves to still greater dangers and losses, through the defection of some, or ambition of others.

"After the peace was concluded in Lombardy, all commotions ceased, except in Tuscany and at Rome: for the pope, being either worn out with old age, or too much agitated in his mind at the thoughts of a peace (to which he had been so obstinately averse) died five days after the publication of it, leaving all the rest of Italy in tranquillity at his death, though he had kept

it continually embroiled in war and contentions whilst he lived."

The election of Innocent VIII., who succeeded Sixtus, was expected to give that peace to Italy which the intriguing and ambitious character of his predecessor had denied to her during the whole course of his rule. A hundred instances had not been sufficient to teach the Italians that the possession of the tempting power wielded by a spiritual sovereign, must outweigh even the force of early character and habitual indulgence. Innocent was soon as deeply interested, if not as deeply versed, in the politics of the Italian states, as the crafty prelate by whom he had been preceded in the chair of St. Peter. The unpopularity of the reigning house in the kingdom of Naples, afforded him an early opportunity of unfolding his views, or, as it ought rather to be said, of developing the invariable policy of the church, under its new administration.

It now became the turn of Naples to beg for the friendship of Florence, and to invoke the aid of that power which she had before been pledged to subvert, against the greater and more specious ambition of a tyranny, whose instrument she now found herself to have been in the part which she had borne against the Medici. The citizens of this republic, however, had too recently escaped from the dangers and expenses of war; they refused, therefore, to mingle in the disputes which did not seem to them connected with the advancement of their interests. Lorenzo had now, indeed, to think for his people; he had assumed the whole charge of the civil and political governance of the city; the populace had, by acknowledging their unfitness to manage the affairs of their government, become unfit in reality; they had reduced themselves, in short, to that condition when, as it has been admirably observed, the happiness of a people becomes an accident dependent upon the character of its prince. While we turn with disgust from the arts with which

we behold this popular favourite abusing the love and confidence of his fellow-citizens to the ruin of themselves and their state, we cannot deny the ability and the indefatigable zeal with which he set himself to watch over their foreign relations, involving interests which, indeed, while they concerned the public, may be considered as no less his own than those which appertained to his ledger and his counting-house. The importance of preserving in the South a balance of power, to operate as a check upon the growing influence of the papal court as a temporal sovereignty, and, perhaps, still more the policy of supporting that branch of the Aragonese family which had there established its dynasty against the renewal of any claims which might be advanced upon the side of France ; all this, to Lorenzo, counterpoised and far indeed outweighed the disadvantage of again interrupting the commercial speculations which the promise of peace had set afloat within the busy city of which the government had been confided to his charge. Aided by the Venetians, and still more by the discontents in the kingdom of Naples, Innocent began the war against his feudatories, as he pretended to consider the princes of the house of Calabria. But, if he found his account in fomenting the revolt of the disaffected barons in the South, he was also harassed in his own dominions by the fears of a rebellion, that would have been much more fatal to him than that which he had borne so great a part in exciting against Frederic, could reasonably be expected to prove to that monarch. The deep intrigues of Lorenzo in his very court, deprived him of that confidence which was absolutely necessary to enable him to meet the forces of his open enemy ; and to these, much more than to the arms which Venice had furnished under the conduct of San Severino, must be attributed the willingness of Innocent to accede to the offers of peace which were held out on the side of his adversaries. With nothing of moment to character-

ize a war in which all Italy had been partitioned for aggression or defence, after a few months the treaty of peace which was to restore the *statu quo* was signed, and the Florentines, freed from an oppressive foreign war for a remote political principle, were left at leisure to pursue the contest, for territorial aggrandizement, on the limits of their proper dominion. In all the struggles which occupied them, as we have seen, they had at the same time been engaged in a contest with the Genoese concerning the city or town of Saizana. In the former wars which Lorenzo had cost the Florentines, this place had fallen into the possession of Genoa, the government of which city had transferred it to a company of bankers for a considerable sum of money. In all the time which elapsed between this event and the consummation of the peace of 1486, the earnest endeavours of the Florentine administration to recover the valuable possession had been vain, though not for a moment had it withdrawn its desires or its cares from the attainment of this end; and while it ventured upon equal terms to contest the political supremacy now with the court of Rome, now with that of Naples, and again with the imposing force of the Venetian aristocracy, it had been unable to overcome the resistance of the mercenary force kept on foot by the directors of the bank of St. George. Having secured a moment of peace with its more powerful antagonists, it now was enabled to array so powerful a force against this place as to render all resistance vain; and, to the great satisfaction of Lorenzo, the inhabitants resolved to submit to his arms without experiencing their power in a general assault.

Florence, and indeed all Italy, had had too many and too recent proofs of the little faith of its rulers, to hope for the advantage of a stable peace, against the manifest and present interest of those whose word now made or interrupted it. It became, therefore, the care of Lorenzo, in this treaty with the pope, to unite, if pos-

sible, the interests of that prelate with the advancement of his own desires. The great secret of all the intrigues of the Vatican had been for many years conducted with a single view to the establishment of the relatives of each of the successive occupants of the holy seat. Sixtus had scarcely felt it necessary to disguise his ambition; and Innocent, if in some degree less daring, had legitimate children for whose establishment he might more openly avail himself of the means which his holy office placed at his control. As the nature, however, of the papal office was incompatible with hereditary succession, and as the family interests of each new pontiff required the removal of those who in the same right had secured the protection of the church before, the only certain mode of building up a lasting nobility which presented itself to the popes, was to make their passing rule an instrument of uniting their nearest of kin to some of the powerful families which governed the various states within the Alps. Thus, and thus only, could hereditary powers and honours be secured to the children and nephews of the great spiritual sovereign.

Resolved upon the accomplishment of his purpose, Lorenzo addressed himself to the passion which he knew had for so many successions dominated the hearts of all the papal sovereigns. He proposed, therefore, to Innocent a union of their families by the marriage of his daughter Maddalena with Franceschetto Cibo, a son of the pope. The hour of his death was, however, drawing rapidly nigh, and as his father's decease had been succeeded or followed within a short period by that of his principal contemporaries, so with him were passing from the scene in which they had borne so conspicuous a part the principal actors in the political drama, whose catastrophe was the conversion of Italy into a battle-field for the contests of individual ambition. The cardinal Riario had too long been accustomed to exercise the authority with which his un-

cle's office had reflectively invested him, to adapt himself, immediately upon the death of Sixtus, to the limited power that he was still entitled, as lord of Imola and Forli, to exercise among the larger states by which his narrow territories were environed. Still less had he been able to moderate the tone of pride with which he had been accustomed to govern his subjects, and which they had felt themselves under the necessity of enduring from the nephew of the pope. When the respect, or we must rather believe the fear, of that name no longer held them in check, the people of Forli resolved to bear no longer the insolence of his pride; and he who had been the principal agent in the conspiracy which the tyranny of Lorenzo de' Medici had provoked before, fell now the victim of a similar plot contrived and executed for the same cause against himself. No sooner was it known that he had fallen, than all the city declared in favour of his murderer; but the citadel held out for his family and for Caterina Sforza his wife, who claimed the government or regency for her child. This woman had fallen into the hands of the citizens, who presented her to the officer in command of the citadel, declaring that they would accept nothing as the ransom of her life except the unconditional surrender of the place. With all the boldness of her character, Caterina heard this annunciation of her fate with trembling, and placing her children as hostages in the hands of her still infuriated subjects, she entreated permission to enter within the citadel, and to dispose those in possession of its walls, by yielding that which they could not retain, to save the life of the mother of their infant and fatherless sovereign. Her entreaties moved the heart of the populace; and while they held her children in their hands, they could not fear that the mother would redeem her own person by exposing them to death. She was permitted, therefore, to enter within the protection of her faithful citadel. The next moment they

beheld her on the walls, and heard her while she demanded the submission of her rebellious subjects without, encouraging to still further resistance the resolution of those who had thus far supported her rights and those of her family. To the declaration that the hostages which she had thus abandoned must undergo the penalty due to her perfidy, she listened with indifference. Even the sight of her offspring led out to suffer, failed to move the firm determination of this woman, born to reign; she placed her hand upon her breast, and laying bare that fountain of life to the gaze of the multitude, "There is yet here wherewithal," said she, "to nourish an heir to the sovereignty which I now vindicate, and which I am resolved to transmit to my children."*

"At this resolute behaviour," says Macchiavelli, "the principal conspirator d'Orso and his accomplices were so discouraged (especially when they saw the pope did not support them, and that Ludovico Sforza, the countess's uncle, was sending a body of forces to her relief) that they packed up as many of their most valuable effects as they could carry off, and retired to Castello. Upon which the countess, having recovered the government of the state, severely punished the inhabitants for their rebellion: and the Florentines, hearing of the count's death, took advantage of that opportunity to make an attempt upon the castle of Piancaldoli which he had formerly taken from them: for which purpose, they sent some troops thither and soon made themselves masters of it; though with the loss

* "The conspirators accordingly relying upon her word, permitted her to go thither: but as soon as she was got safe into the citadel, she altered her tone, and sent them word she would use her utmost endeavours to bring them all to the most cruel death she could invent, in revenge for the murder of her husband: and when they, on the other hand, threatened to kill her children, she courageously made answer, 'they might deal with them as they pleased, for she knew how to provide herself with more.'"—*Farnsworth's Macchiavelli*.

of Ciecco, one of the most celebrated architects and engineers of his time."

The more pacific character of the successor of Sixtus, and the death of the uncontrollable nephew of that prelate, gave to Italy a season of peace, which she had not known for many years. The life of Lorenzo, it is believed, was necessary to the conservation of this state of affairs, and the important political changes that succeeded his decease give colour to the opinion. But Lorenzo had reached already the verge of his existence; and those who examine the state of the Transalpine cabinets, will hardly believe that the petty tyrant of a little principality could have arrested the course of those events which the jarring interests of the courts of England, France, and Spain, made requisite.

In the meanwhile all that might appear to conduce to the desirable end of maintaining a good understanding among the Italian cities, was sought after by those who believed themselves principally interested in the preservation of peace. Lorenzo, as we have seen, had won the church to his interest, and to favour his usurpation, by giving his daughter in marriage to the son of Innocent; and a similar union had long been contemplated between the ducal house of Milan and the sovereign princes of Naples. This measure, intended to secure the permanence of so desirable a peace within the Alps, resulted with a very contrary effect, and became the immediate cause of those great changes, which, commencing with the arrival of Charles VIII. in Italy, subverted her ancient state, and rendered vain the subtleties of her politics for the preservation of her independent rank and influence among the nations of Europe. Yet for a moment the thick population of the whole peninsula believed in the flattering hope of a lasting tranquillity, and rested satisfied with the now irrecoverable loss of their liberties, in the prospect of a gentle exercise of that sovereignty

which they had transferred to princes and chiefs of their own choice and creation. In the midst of these pleasing illusions, Lorenzo de' Medici was seized with an attack of the gout, inherited from his father; and just as a new era for Florence, for Italy, and for the world, was beginning to dawn, this prince and master of the ancient regimen was called from the scene of his greatness, his hopes, and his pride. This event occurred in the month of April of the year 1492.

To Lorenzo de' Medici, however we may consider the report of his name to be exaggerated by flattery or by ignorance, we still have one acknowledgment to make; and we cannot, even on account of this very exaggeration, allow the epoch of his rule in Florence to pass without a special notice in the history of that city. From the tenour of the foregoing pages the political condition of the still miscalled republic is to be inferred by the reader; but the highest glory of the Medicean age consists in the revival of letters, attributed by the Italians in a great measure to the encouragement afforded by Lorenzo and his father to those who, devoting themselves to literary pursuits, abandoned to them the conduct of the political concerns of their country. Many years before, the writings of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, had secured to the Italian language a pre-eminence to which the imitations of the fathers of English, French, and Spanish literature bear witness, and which has coloured the productions of the proudest era of English poetry with the characteristics of Italian manners and Italian feeling. An unfortunate influence, exercised by authority of these unequalled names, in the next generation resulted in little less than the ruin of Italian letters for the just reviving language of the ancient Romans. From this time till the moment of Lorenzo's accession, not a single name adds lustre to the literature created by the efforts of the three Florentines; an humble imitation of the few recovered relics of the Augustan age was

received for the highest exercise of native genius ; and all the patronage of Cosimo had failed to add a single work to the small catalogue of Italy's national literature. Here then was the superiority which elevated the son above the glory of his father, and in some measure justifies the title of the Magnificent, which a too obsequious age bestowed on him. We do not certainly believe that the extensive encouragement held out to the learned of his court by Lorenzo, was the single fruit of a disinterested admiration of talent applied to the acquisition of knowledge, or that the fostering care which he bestowed upon the ripening attempts of more ambitious geniuses was the result alone of a desire for the promotion of his country's glory ; but Lorenzo certainly had less need of courting the acquiescence of the learned than Cosimo had had ; and the preference which he manifested for those who devoted themselves to the building up of a new literature to adorn and illustrate the language of his country, indicates a boldness and originality which we seek in vain in the character of his father. The names of Pulci and Poliziano, which we find as those of the favourites of his hours of leisure, outweigh themselves the whole catalogue of all who preceded them from the time of Boccaccio and Petrarch ; and still more recommend the fame of their patron to the regard of posterity in the impulse which their efforts communicated to the age. Though fluctuating and variable, Italian literature, from the era of the publication of the works of Poliziano and the *Morgante Maggiore*, has never had an era to which we turn in vain for some illustrious name ; and the glories of the succeeding years, which gave to Italy the works of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso, instead of the barren copies of a half-barbarous Latin, are a part of the debt of Florence to Lorenzo de' Medici ; a part, however, which has been greatly overrated, and which must, after all, appear of small account in comparison with the injury

done by his ambition to her declining liberties. Lorenzo himself was the author of a few light but pleasing productions. Court sycophancy over-valued them in his life-time, and the affected admiration of a modern writer, whose work appears to have been composed in a spirit scarcely less dignified, has been unable to obtain for them that consideration which his indiscriminating praise appears to indicate as their due ; if judged, however, by the influence which they exercised as the productions of the great arbiter of the Italian states, and by the part which they bore in this manner in the revival of Italian letters, they become, indeed, subjects of a higher eulogium, and deserve for their author the gratitude of all who glory in the advancement and the prosperity of Italian literature.

The last days of Lorenzo's life were an uninterrupted triumph. His union with Innocent opened, as he had expected it would do, the way to still farther honours for his family ; and almost one of the latest gratifications with which his new ally sought to pamper his vanity, was the elevation of his son to the cardinalate before the age at which it was usual to receive that distinguished honour. The policy of Lorenzo, therefore, in uniting himself to the family of Innocent and the interests of Rome, may be considered as the cause of the pontificate of Leo, and of all the remarkable events which characterize that brilliant era. Lorenzo died at his villa at Careggi, in the forty-fourth year of his age, after a prosperous rule, which may justly be denominated a reign, leaving three sons to succeed to his wealth and his name. Piero, indeed, was intended as a successor at the same time to his power ; but this was only hereditary so far as the son should inherit the ability of his father. Giovanni, who had been made a Cardinal, became Leo X. As the intended successor did not, however, possess any portion of the character required to hold the arduous rule sustained by Lorenzo, and as the Florentines were well aware of his inca-

capacity, they naturally turned with regret upon the decease of his father ; the latter years of whose life had given them the enjoyment of an almost perfect peace ; and looked with anxiety to the storms and disasters, which the unfitness of his son to wield the too heavy sceptre transmitted to his hands, would bring again upon their country. During the long period in which the Medici had been rising to that eminence which we have seen them attain, both in Florence and among the other cities of Italy, in the time of Cosimo and Lorenzo, the withdrawal of the ultramontane princes from the domestic disputes of the Italians had been in no inconsiderable degree a cause of the prosperity of their commerce and arts. The kingdom of Naples alone had offered the incentive to French and Spanish ambition for mingling in the affairs of the peninsula ; and even this interference was not calculated to embroil the states of Italy in difficulties with these Transalpine courts. When the princes of Anjou and Aragon advanced their opposite claims, they never pretended other than personal rights, without contemplating the annexation of the kingdom of Naples as a part or a province of the dominions subject to the crown of Spain or France. At last, however, the pretensions of the Angevine princes, weak as they were, descended to the king of France, a monarch who could not for a moment be supposed to value them in comparison with his inherited crown, but who estimated them at their full worth as affording a pretext for stretching the dominions of ambitious France beyond the limits within which nature had bounded them. It required, however, that Italy should be untrue to herself in order that the feeble claims, transmitted by a subject to the king of France, should enable that monarch to pass the barriers that seemed piled by the creator himself for the defence of Italy against the insinuation of foreign influence or the invasion of foreign force.

This country, in spite of its divisions and intestine

dissensions, had been increasing in power and wealth from the time that it had shaken off the yoke of the German emperors, till it had concentrated the riches of all the world and become the centre of civilization to Europe. The names by which its history is adorned or distinguished, at least during the greater part of the middle ages, though revered beyond the Alps, were confined in their actual influence to the country bounded by those mountains, and by the inland seas which had for so many ages been the only waters acquainted with the rich barks of the boldest navigators. The history of Italy appears apart from that of all the world, at least from that of Christendom, for all political purposes; and her treaties, her wars, her alliances, her whole political system in fine, regarded the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, and the Alps, as the boundaries of the world; the ambition of a duke of Milan, a popular favourite in Florence, a king of Naples, or even of a duke of Ferrara, seemed to be, and was indeed, of more importance to the Italians than the revolutions of England, France, and Germany, and the formation of unlimited empires beyond the borders of their well-guarded country. Perhaps the prudence of Lorenzo de' Medici for a moment repressed the jealousies of the various princes who had now usurped dominion in the different cities of Italy, and counteracted the natural tendency of their mutual fears to fortify themselves by alliance of powers seated beyond the influence of Cisalpine revolutions; at all events it has added not a little to his fame, that he did not live to witness or partake in the infamous feuds which brought upon Italy the flood of foreign arms and foreign influence, and laid that beautiful and happy country open to the greedy desires, the artful policy, and the savage ferocity of powerful nations, in the collision of whose interests her own could not fail to be crushed. To this result the pacific character of Innocent, and the crafty forbearance of Ferdinand of Naples, had greatly con-

duced in opposition to the headstrong violence of Ludovico of Milan. The removal of these two influential characters from the political field almost immediately after that of Lorenzo de' Medici, prepared the way for the final overthrow of the system so long pursued by them, and on which the preservation of Italian independence now hung by a feeble thread. During the pupilage of the duke of Milan, his uncle had exercised as a nominal regency the sovereign authority in Lombardy; the ward, however, now twenty years of age, incited by his father-in-law Alphonso of Calabria, demanded the cession of the reins which had been guided till then in his name, but with no regard to his interest, by his uncle. Ludovico looked before he resolved upon the final measures which his condition appeared to require. In Florence, the accession of Piero de' Medici promised him little support; the vanity of that young aspirant had bound him to the party of the Neapolitan king, and the regent of Milan beheld no alternative for himself but that of abdication or deposition.

At this moment the claims of Charles VIII. appeared to be the only hope on which he could rely for support. The fatal embassy departed from Milan; and Charles, at the instigation of the faithless regent, prepared for his famous descent upon Italy. Upon the result of this invasion the last safety of this aspiring traitor now was cast; had Charles retired from the field, a union of princes in Italy would have crushed the unprincipled ambition which had not hesitated to endanger the common independence for the satisfaction of a personal revenge, or the doubtful establishment of a new dynasty in Lombardy. In the fear that France might possibly refuse to second the ardour of her prince, Ludovico endeavoured to involve in a similar predicament the other princes who might be dealt with by an appeal to their hopes or their fears. He persuaded, therefore, the impatient monarch, as indispensable to his success, that he should obtain from

the principal cities which lay in the way of his march a declaration of favour to his claims, particularly insisting that an insignificant force should be furnished by the Florentines in augmentation of his numbers as a token of adherence to his cause. Charles was not backward to act upon this suggestion, and Piero had scarcely assumed the arduous task of directing the destinies of his native city,—a task rendered more arduous by the magnificent manner in which it had been performed by his father,—when he was called upon to choose between the enmity of Naples or of France; the one most to be dreaded as a domestic foe, the other an exterminating enemy, which, if he should pass the mountains or the sea, not the power of Florence, but the efforts of all Italy might prove insufficient to resist. Piero was unequal to the emergency; he did not dare to refuse the feeble aid demanded by the king of France; an aid not wanted, as he himself understood, but for the purpose of implicating him in the quarrel of the foreigner against his natural allies, and securing his neutrality in the contest which should ensue. Alarmed at the dilemma in which the arts of Ludovico had thus embarrassed him, he turned to Alphonso. He assured him that the contribution which Charles demanded as a quota from Florence, could scarcely be considered as any increase of the force to be arrayed against Naples; while that, as an ally of the invader, he might always act as a mediator in behalf of those with whom his interest and his feelings united him. Alphonso, fearing the effect of such an example, refused his assent to a scheme devised by cowardice and to be executed by treachery; so that Piero still found himself under the necessity of choosing between the distant danger and the neighbouring ruin. In the meanwhile a thousand accidents arose to delay the expedition of Charles, and to make the situation of Ludovico but little less uneasy than that of the tyrant of Florence. Piero, however, had in France two person-

al enemies as unceasing in their instigations as the regent of Milan, whom political interests alone had urged to the infamous measure of calling into Italy the natural enemies of her prosperity.

Among the numerous members of the Mediccan family were the brothers Lorenzo and Giovanni, remote connexions of the ruling branch. While yet Lorenzo the Magnificent, in the name of a principal citizen, held the reins of government, Piero, presuming on his inheritance, had assumed, even towards the members of his own family, an air of authority and pride, which they, exalted by the same influence, could scarcely be expected to bear. A difference had already arisen between the proud cousins of the prince and the vain expectant of his transmissible power. The latter had directed his addresses, perhaps not very honourably intended, to a beautiful young Florentine girl, who had already inspired the bosom of Giovanni with an ardent affection. The son of Lorenzo expected to find all those upon whom his father now looked as his subjects, obsequious servants of his will. On the other hand, the warmth of the young lover's passion was perhaps excited additionally by the stimulus of such an opposition; and the attentions which at first had been the offering of passion at the altar of love, became the defiance of an uncompromising pride. After various indications of a resolution upon either side to fight upon this theme, both parties met, upon occasion of some festival, in the presence of the fair object of their desires and not less the subject of their excited pride. Piero, by his attentions, succeeded in keeping aloof all others whom the beauty of the young creature would have attracted to her side. One individual, however, regardless of the evident displeasure of her princely admirer, still attended her steps, and, eager in his service, appeared resolved to match the earnestness of his devotion against the condescending regard with which the son of Lorenzo proffered

his love. The mask which concealed the features of the young and zealous devotee was not intended to conceal his person from the knowledge of Piero, or to shield him from the fear of his anger ; every word and every gesture revealed the long-unyielding rival ; and Piero, braved in his vanity as deeply as in his passion, after a feeble struggle with his better feelings and his calmer judgment, abandoned to his fury all the government of his actions. While the ill-repressed tempest, half governed and half victorious, still struggled in the bosom of the prince, an officious tender of service, too graciously received, on the part of the insolent subject, bore away the last guard which prudence had interposed between the rage of Piero and the fate of his insolent subject. As they stood face to face confronting each other, Piero extended his arm, and tearing the mask from the face of his rival, exposed the well-known countenance of his kinsman, burning with anger and shame, to the gaze of the throng and to the contempt of such a wrong inflicted and received. At the same instant the dagger of the young lover glittered before the eyes of the terrified multitude, and in the next appeared to be buried in the bosom of his adversary. Piero, however, was well fitted for the part of a regal tyrant which he was born to assume ; with less boldness, and with less real sagacity and prudence, he had more of the common caution of cowardice than his father ; nor did he ever expose himself to the issue of a quarrel such as this, without some security in addition to that which he derived from the name of his parent. To the astonishment of all who had witnessed the blow which his angry kinsman had dealt against him, and who had expected from its violence to behold the dagger in the bosom of the aggressor, Piero but reeled beneath its strength ; the hidden mail with which he had provided himself, and which was constantly worn by him as a protection for his insolent assumption of authority, had blunted the point of his antagonist's weapon, and

saved the person of its wearer from all but the stigma of the blow.

Exasperated by this insult, and forgetting that his own aggression had brought it justly on his head, the heir apparent to a power little less than sovereign wanted the magnanimity to forgive and the prudence to dissemble. He cast himself upon the authority of his father, and demanded the death of his cousin. Lorenzo might have found, had he been willing to make the experiment, sufficient obsequiousness in those who still pretended to be his fellow-citizens to obtain sentence of death against one who had, though in manifest defence of his person, directed a blow at the life of his son; and there is no reason to think Lorenzo himself was withheld by any conscientious spirit of right; but the light quarrel of a lover did not appear to him sufficient ground for renewing the personal hatred to his family, which in the time of the Pazzi had been so much more dangerous to his state than all the little that remained of public virtue. The manifest favour of the populace in this case loudly expressed for Giovanni, perhaps induced the dictator and arbiter of life and death in Florence to smother the displeasure which such an open disregard of the dignity of his acknowledged heir had occasioned him. He was satisfied, therefore, to obtain sentence of banishment against the offender, in whose disgrace another of his family, the Lorenzo mentioned above, was made to participate. Escaping from the place to which they had been exiled, the young Florentines made their way to France, and there they now revenged their former wrong by stirring up the king to the enterprise proposed by Ludovico the regent of Milan. They assured him that not Florence, but Piero de' Medici, was in league with the Aragonese family which now possessed the throne he coveted; and that the Florentines, besides desiring his friendship, would gladly release themselves by his means from the disgraceful bondage into which they

found themselves fallen. So much did the representations of personal enmity, justified in this instance, operate upon the mind of Charles, that when, at last, the conduct of Florence compelled him to a declaration of hostility, he waged an exclusive war upon Piero, by confiscating all of his property invested in France or in the cities conquered by her arms, and by sparing that which belonged to every other citizen of Florence. The result of this measure was to show the Florentines to what expense and what imminent danger their support of the Medicean rule must inevitably reduce them. To the earnest representations of these exiles—to the more secret, but still more authoritative instigations of the ambitious Ludovico; to the promptings of the adventurous spirit of the monarch and the hope of territorial aggrandizement, was added the solicitation of another individual destined to bear a conspicuous part on the theatre of Italian politics, and who could not be silent in this opening scene of the last drama of her independence. This was the cardinal of St. Peter in Vincola, afterwards Julius II., equally, says a celebrated historian, the scourge of his country as cardinal and as pope. The personal dislike of Alexander had driven him by persecution into banishment; so that the faults of that infamous prelate divided with the selfish ambition of Ludovico the shame of having brought an invader upon Italy, and violated the independence which had remained even in the wreck of her liberties. How insignificant appears the cause compared with the result! The whole desire of the prelate was to involve in difficulties the ruler of the church, by whose persecutions he had been driven from Italy. When, in spite of all the obstacles opposed to its adoption, the resolution to pass the Alps had been formally taken by Charles, ambassadors were sent in his name to demand a passage for his troops through such of the Italian states as should lie in the way of the route which it might become ex-

pedient for him to take. Many cities temporized, and many gave ambiguous excuses ; but Florence was expected to return a prompt and explicit reply. The majority of the most influential citizens, convinced of the folly of resistance, advised the immediate concession of all that Charles had thought proper to demand ; but Piero urged the treaty by which Florence had bound herself to Naples, and dismissed the ambassadors of the king with a refusal which he might construe into a defiance.

The heat of Charles' impetuosity was wisely regulated by the prudence of his counsellors. They demonstrated to him the expediency of distinguishing in his resentment between Piero and his subjects, in such a manner as to win them to his interest while he converted them at the same time from the love of his adversary. At their suggestion he banished from Lyons the agents of Piero engaged extensively in commercial speculations in that city, while he allowed the other merchants from Florence to proceed without interruption in their mercantile concerns. Piero was at no loss to recognize the contrivance of Ludovico in this injury, and in his turn he endeavoured to subvert the influence of this intriguing foe with the dreadful adversary, whose now impending arrival approached with new terrors to his timid heart. The natural baseness of his disposition suggested to him a ready means of betraying the secret councils of Ludovico to the prince whose ambition he was now using as an instrument of his private views. Concealing the ambassador of the French king behind the arras of his audience-chamber, he led the commissioner from Milan into an exposition of the views of his master in relation to the contemplated invasion of Charles. Taverna fell into the snare. He acknowledged that Ludovico had intended to avail himself of the arrival of the French for the advancement of his own purposes of ambition or revenge, and he ridiculed the idea of Italy being in danger from

any attempt of Charles to establish the power of his crown within the Alps.

By this act of treachery the ruler of Florence expected to destroy the confidence of the French monarch in the ally upon whom he had most relied for success in his perilous adventure. In this, however, the cunning of Piero overreached itself; for the ambassador, who in secret had heard the declaration of the representative of the Milanese court, had learned enough to convince him, that whatever might be the motive of Ludovico, his assistance was at least to be depended upon till the house of Aragon should be shaken from the Neapolitan throne. It might then be the aim of the princes of the North to interfere with the establishment of the Gallic dynasty; but Charles had little fear of the minor powers of Italy when once he should have built up his throne in the midst of them, and could pour from the Alps the irresistible power of his native kingdom upon the divided states that might seek to molest the quiet of his rule in the South.

The king now, therefore, having resolved upon the invasion of Italy, prepared by composing, even at a sacrifice, the difficulties with which his foreign relations had surrounded him, to devote the whole force of his military to this important object; and the Aragonese, perceiving the inevitable war into which they were about to be impelled, determined to have the boast at least, if not the advantage, of commencing hostilities. A Neapolitan squadron, conducted by Frederic, the brother of the king, was fitted out to make a descent on the Ligurian coast; having effected nothing, it was however soon compelled to return, by the activity of Ludovico in preparing a stronger force to oppose it. Florence, yet trembling for her neutrality, in which she had under the direction of her ruler reposed her safety, was now to make a final surrender of this last subterfuge. The fleet of Frederic had been admitted into the port of Leghorn and the Porto Pisano, and

had there received reinforcements in munitions of war. This privilege was now claimed by the opposite side, and denied by the authorities of Florence under the direction of Piero. This headstrong chief about the same time allowed himself to be brought into a personal conference with Ferdinand, the son of Alphonso and leader of his armies. Won by the specious friendship of the young prince, he united a part of the Florentine forces to those of Naples, and thus completed the imprudent alliance which was to bring the city intrusted to his care into open conflict with the power of the crown of France.

All minor preparations being made, on the thirteenth of August 1494 Charles, at the head of his army, began the passage of the Alps by the way of Mon Ginevra, and having been opposed by no obstruction except that which was offered by the nature of the mountain region which he was to traverse, arrived without impediment on the Italian side.

CHAPTER III.

Charles arrives at Pavia, and marches to the Frontiers of Tuscany.—Piero de' Medici visits him at Sarzanella, and surrenders the Fortresses and Ports of the Florentines on the Mediterranean.—Is declared a Traitor, and driven from the City.—Revolt of the Pisans.—Charles enters Florence.—Piero Capponi obtains favourable Conditions for the City.—Submission of the Pope, and Conquest of Naples.—Fra Girolamo Savonarola.—Departure of Charles from Naples.—Battle of the Taro.—Recovery of the Kingdom by the Aragonese.

THE armament of Charles which contemplated the conquest of Italy, could have presented an appearance but little formidable had that unhappy country been united to resist his invasion. A body of 12,000 infantry and of 1,600 men-at-arms, attended each by six

well-mounted horsemen, in all about 23,000 men, was less than Florence alone had often assembled for the defence of her own walls or for purposes of foreign aggression; but the discipline of these troops, the character of the wars to which they had been accustomed, and the ardour of invasion, would have rendered them equal to a much larger force of the Italians, even if all her cities had united against them. The bloodless fights in which the little armies of Florence, Venice, and Milan, not to include those of the still smaller states, had been accustomed to decide the petty quarrels of their governments, had quite unfitted them for a contest with the trained and veteran soldiers of a king whose predecessors had for generations been engaged in sanguinary wars, signalized by days like those of Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt, by the conquests of Henry V., and the prodigious victories of the Maid of Orleans. The very name of such a soldiery appalled the hearts of the Italians, who from the exercise of peaceful professions were now unexpectedly called upon to assume the practice of arms. The historian Guicciardini, now our chief authority, declares the terror which the artillery of the French spread over the country through which they passed. Long before, the use of powder had been introduced into Italy; but the clumsiness of the huge engines fitted only for the attack of fortified places, and even then but little terrible from their unskilful management, gave an imperfect idea to the Italians of the deadly instruments about to be displayed against them by the French. Even Guicciardini himself, to judge from the expressions with which he designates the ordnance of Charles' army, appears to have been impressed with an awe and a horror which it is difficult for us at the present day to comprehend.

For a moment the hope of Italy revived on the intelligence that Charles, attacked at Asti by that fatal disease the small-pox, was hardly expected to survive. One month was sufficient to remove the pleasing delu-

sion ; Charles was easily restored to health, and moving his camp from this mountain-region, made his entry into Pavia. In this city the unhappy duke of Milan was held a prisoner by Ludovico, together with his young and beautiful wife, whose charms are said to have had no less a portion in the misfortunes of her husband than the inherited throne upon which he was not destined to sit. Charles was hardly permitted by his wily ally to see the miserable victims of his ambition or his lust. The duchess found her way at last to the presence of the youthful monarch, and, casting herself at his feet, implored that mercy for her father which she did not dare to invoke for herself in the presence of her watchful guardian and master. Moved by the sight of her beauty, which is said to have pierced the heart of Ludovico himself, and to have won him to the softer thoughts of love until her coldness turned his breast to hate, the gallant monarch felt his interest excited for his fair petitioner ; and there is no doubt that he meditated the rescue of herself and her husband from their harsh imprisonment, in which he was compelled for the moment to acquiesce. Ambition was, however, the first feeling of his heart ; and the voice of sympathy was stifled by the cry of that engrossing and selfish passion. While Charles was secretly resolving their safety, he still left them in the hands of Ludovico, now more than ever afraid of their influence, since it had been able to excite a feeling prejudicial to his interest even in the breast of his dependent ally. The news, therefore, which overtook the French army on their arrival at Piacenza of the death of the unfortunate duke, could excite but little surprise in the bosom of the king ; nor was he unprepared for the annunciations of Ludovico's immediate succession to the long-coveted honours of the ducal crown. The pretext by which he at the same time attempted to strengthen his claim could scarcely be agreeable to the young invader, inasmuch as it could be considered only as the intro-

duction of a new competitor for power, and a new claimant to supremacy in Italy. Pretending to acknowledge the ancient and formally abandoned right of the emperors to ratify the choice of magistrates in the Lombard states, Ludovico urged that the ceremony of such investiture not having been performed, deprived the former rulers of Milan of all consideration as sovereigns, and made their government a usurpation against the paramount authority of the German emperors. Maximilian, who then occupied the imperial throne, for the sake of obtaining an influence in Italy, was easily induced to confer upon Ludovico the sovereignty of a state over which he had no claim, and which thus only could be brought to throw itself under the authority of his crown; while the ambitious regent, armed with this ambiguous title, pretended to enter the field against all who should oppose his rights, as the vindicator of the ancient sovereignty in Lombardy, and as the first legitimate claimant of the ducal crown. Ludovico had not expected to deceive a single government into his alliance by this measure; but he knew, that in the German emperor he could compel a powerful auxiliary into the field in his behalf, by this vain acknowledgment of his paramount authority. In the meanwhile the army of the French king, passing from the North, had entered Tuscany and undertaken the reduction of Sarzana.

Florence might have expected this; indeed, the conduct of Charles had already evinced the determination of making his way to the Neapolitan throne, though every step were to be disputed with the numberless petty states and cities which lay upon the line of his march. Yet, prepared as she should have been for this invasion, she could not contemplate its dangers without trembling on its approach; she had taken no measures for resistance or defence; and she knew that it was not, and had not been, in her power to adopt any that should arrest the progress of the invasion. She

looked, therefore, to her principal head, and seemed to expect from him some security in the impending peril. Piero also felt how much he had himself been instrumental in bringing this storm upon Florence, and he fancied that the look which in their terror the citizens now cast upon him, contained the threat of vengeance rather than the acknowledgment of dependence and the entreaty for aid. The example of his father seemed to instruct him in the only course now left for him to pursue. He resolved, therefore, in imitation of Lorenzo's journey to Naples, to throw himself upon the clemency of Charles by visiting in person his camp. It had never occurred, however, to this unskilful politician, that a radical difference in the posture of affairs demanded very different measures. He forgot that even his father's influence, preponderating as it had been in all the courts of Italy, would hardly have secured him any favour in the cabinets of Transalpine princes; that when the king of Naples was to be gained, there had been powerful reasons in aid of the eloquence of Lorenzo; and that Ferdinand had been purchased by an appeal to the interest which urged his withdrawal from the league against Florence. To the Florentines, moreover, in the case of a result to his treaty which they might think inexpedient and unfortunate, he rendered himself still more offensive and open to censure, inasmuch as he had, without consultation with their magistrates, presumed to barter their interests and their possessions as his personal right by inheritance. Without considering these points, which indeed required but little consideration, Piero departed from the city and threw himself upon the mercy of his resistless enemy. His reception was all that his personal vanity could desire in the depression of his state, and all that the courtesy of a chivalric prince could show. But even while he received with courtesy, Charles negotiated with severity. He insisted, as a sole condition of that peace which Florence now implored and

which she had so recently rejected, the surrender of the citadels of Sarzana, of Sarzanello, of Pietrasanta, of Pisa, and of Leghorn; to be faithfully restored upon the occupation of Naples by the invading army. Piero had undertaken to secure the safety of his state, and to bring back peace to his citizens. He knew no other means of accomplishing his purpose than unconditional submission, and, anxious to procure the safety of what he considered his own property in the commonwealth, he forgot that the Florentines themselves might rather possibly abide the issue of a contest even with the king of France, than yield without a blow the best part of their territory, the only ports of their republic, and their sole defence upon the North against future Lombard aggression. Piero now returned to the city, anticipating a reception similar, perhaps, to that which had greeted his father when he returned with the treaty of accord and alliance obtained from the Neapolitan king. Before he reached its gates, however, he was saluted with tidings of the general discontent. Upon passing the walls he still beheld increasing manifestations of dissatisfaction; yet still he did not, for a short time, comprehend the extent to which the minds of his fellow-citizens, about to be no longer his subjects, were exasperated against him. The first intimation of a general rising was given at the palace, into which he was not permitted to enter. On this moment, and on the energy and address with which he should meet this crisis, depended the fate of Piero. No combination had been formed against his authority for the purpose of producing concert in opposition. If, therefore, he had retained his self-possession, and applied that power which was still at his command to the punishment of this single act of insubordination, instead of betraying those signs of trepidation which declare a consciousness of weakness, and encourage revolt; the minds of the people, however inflamed, would have subsided quickly into the sullen acquiescence of habitual obedience.

But even the troops which, under the command of his relative Orsini, had been stationed without the city, and which were afterwards to furnish a charge against him to the people, were rendered useless to his cause by his pusillanimity. After exciting the displeasure of all who yet dared to think, by posting such a guard around the city, which still contended for the appearance of liberty, and had exacted from Lorenzo himself a show of regard for its forms and its names, the feeble Piero did not dare to call this force to his aid at the moment when its appearance in arms for his cause would have repressed the growing rebellion, and fixed more strongly the power of the city's master by the punishment of those who had dared to hold him accountable. When it became evident that Piero was no less destitute of counsel than the people themselves, and that the want of concert upon their part was compensated by a want of all self-possession upon his, the most resolute among the malcontents began to raise the cry of "liberty," which in the early days of the republic had been always sufficient to assemble the people in arms for its support. Less powerful as an appeal to the Florentines in this decline of their glory, it only became terrible to its enemies in proportion as they were wanting to themselves in boldness and energy. That cry, therefore, which, when raised by the devoted Pazzi against Lorenzo had found no echo in the breasts of the Florentines, was answered by shouts and acclamations, and all the tumult of excited passion, when to the hatred of Piero's oppression was united the scorn which his want of conduct and courage could not fail to excite. At each repeated cry, which now rung through the streets as the thronging populace rushed to the *Piazza* of the *Signoria*, the heart of Piero sunk in his bosom, till at last, unable more and more each moment, to confront the peril, he abandoned to the hope of personal safety the thought and care of all that three generations of his fathers had been wil-

ling to hazard, personal safety and property, and public honour and private esteem, and the consciousness of virtue and the prosperity of their country, to secure. Uneertain whether he had been betrayed by the monarch for whom he had called this tempest upon his head, and who, if he had reflected, he must have discovered to have no interest in Florence apart from his own, he did not direct his flight towards the camp at the head of which he might have still returned a conqueror, to punish or pardon. So perfectly had the terror of the moment turned his mind, indeed, from all power of thought, that it did not occur to him, either to claim the protection of Rome and Naples, dependent as they were for aid on the side of Florence upon the predominance of his counsels and his authority in that city. In the panic of dismay, forgetful of all these resources, he turned his horse towards Romagna, and, accompanied by his brothers, determined to seek an asylum with the former allies, or rather dependents, of his house, the Bentivogli, lords of Bologna. His reception at this court was far from gratifying. Bentivogli in the coarsest manner reproached him with his cowardice in abandoning a state and a power such as he had enjoyed by inheritance from his father, without so much as one drop of blood shed for its maintenance. He told him that this easy abandonment of the supreme controul was calculated to weaken the authority usurped by all the petty chiefs who governed the cities of Italy accustomed to be free, and that he felt, therefore, little obligation to defend a person who had done so much injury to the common cause of princes, and who had proved so utterly incompetent to the task of even aiding in his own defence. Picro, mortified and alarmed at this reception, leaving his brothers behind him, abandoned Bologna and pursued his way to Venice, in which city, though less rudely, he was little more graciously received. This change of residence was afterwards the cause of important results to his

fortune, and delayed for a time the return of the Florentines to the yoke of his family. Thus, after seventy years of authority exercised with nothing less than sovereign pomp, the family of the Medici were expelled from Florence, to begin that first series of disasters which led it in the end to the still more perfect establishment of a constituted sovereignty. Such was the year 1494, so pregnant with the actual and future fortunes of Italy. Nor yet had Florence witnessed all that that year was to produce.

In the meanwhile Charles had advanced through Pisa to Signa, a small town but seven miles from the capital of Tuscany. While dwelling, on his way, for a short period at the former place, Charles had been induced, in spite of his recent treaty with Piero, to assume an attitude of open hostility to the people of Florence; who, notwithstanding their disapprobation of its conditions, had suffered them to be fulfilled to the letter by the cession of all the fortresses required by the French. Ludovico had from the beginning cast his eyes and fixed his hopes on the acquisition of Pisa; hopes which the hatred of the Pisans for the government and people of Florence rendered not unreasonable. On the arrival, however, of Charles, the Pisans, desirous of returning to their ancient liberty, tumultuously demanded its restoration; and hailing the French as their deliverers, implored the sanction of their countenance in throwing off the yoke under which they had so long groaned, and which had rendered their once populous city a desert. So warm were their entreaties, and so affecting their appeal to the sympathy of the bold warriors before whom they detailed the long account of their sufferings, that the tears are said to have flowed down the rugged cheeks of the war-beaten soldiers, and to have choked the utterance of the king, prepared as he had been for slaughter, and accustomed to all the desolation of countries ravaged by fire and by the sword. An ambiguous answer returned to their

entreaties was construed by the people of Pisa into a promise of support. They rushed madly through the avenues of the city, tearing down, wherever they could find them, the ensigns of the Florentine Signory, and for a brief period revelled in all the luxury of anticipated liberty. The intelligence of this insurrection aroused the fears, and at the same moment the indignation, of the Florentines ; they felt the force of the danger to which they were exposed, and they resolved to avert it, if possible, by the most prudent submission, but at the same time to vindicate at all hazards the sovereignty and independence of their magistracy. On the seventeenth of November Charles made his entry into the city of Florence, attended by a numerous escort of knights all mounted, and, like himself, with lances couched as if for a tournament. The people, the magistracy, and the clergy, joined in the pompous welcome, and nothing offered to the minds of the Florentines the thought of an enemy in Charles, or of a hostile triumph in his occupation of the city. Yet those into whose hands the government had fallen on the flight of Piero, in all the seeming pomp of rejoicing had not been unmindful of the important charge committed to their hands ; and while they showed themselves most earnest for the preservation of peace, had prepared for the necessities of war. After the first ceremonies were over, it became necessary to discuss the terms upon which the several parties stood in relation one to the other. Charles insisted, that as he had entered with arms in his hand, he had in fact effected the conquest of the city, and had by the rights of war the sole power of dictating conditions, to which the Florentines were bound to submit. Something of this had been anticipated on the part of the magistracy, and, in expectation of the contest to which it might give rise, they had so disposed the force of the city as to make it most available upon any sudden emergency, while a large troop from the surrounding country was

kept on the alert to rush upon the city on the first signal of her *larum bell*. At the same time that the citizens discovered the hostile attitude which Charles had resolved to assume in the stipulation of ultimate terms with the city, he himself was led to observe a spirit of resistance which the pusillanimity of their ruler had hardly allowed to anticipate in the citizens. It is more than probable, therefore, that he would have receded greatly from his first exorbitant demands but for the excited cupidity of his soldiery, which had been permitted to indulge in the hope of a rich booty on the conquest of this opulent city, and could not now, with safety to the success of the great adventure, be repressed.

Four principal citizens had been formed into a commission to treat with him upon this point, and to settle the terms on which Charles should be considered as the ally, the guest, or the protector of the city. Chief of this commission was Piero Capponi, a fit representative of that family which had given to the republic the virtues and the services of Gino and Neri. Day after day as these commissioners rejected the offers made by the pretended conqueror these offers were changed; but every substitute, requiring the surrender of the city's freedom by the acknowledgment of Charles as its conqueror, presented the same objection to the faithful and jealous guardians of the city's charter, and was by them rejected without the acquiescence which might be inferred by the delay required for a moment's consideration. Wearied at last, and fearing that longer treaty might become even more pernicious in its consequences than either coercion or retrocession from his demands; or desirous, it may be, of an opportunity for rifling so wealthy a city; Charles invited the commissioners to attend in his presence, and to hear the reading and declaration of his ultimatum. As the officer proceeded to read, Capponi could with difficulty restrain his anger at the immoderate demands. At each pa-

ragraph his impetuosity displayed itself in bursts of indignant contempt, till at last, snatching the paper from the hands of the reader, he tore it in pieces, and scattering the fragments to the winds, exclaimed to the astonished monarch, "*If these be the terms upon which you offer peace, take to your trumpets king ; our bells shall answer them.*" Having uttered these words he rushed from the presence.

Charles would no doubt have been pleased to punish the insolence of this defiance had he felt himself permitted to indulge the feeling which then ruled in his bosom ; but he too well knew the importance of proceeding upon his great expedition with an army that should have all the imposing influence of an unconquered name ; and he felt that the advantage which the courage and discipline of his soldiers, sufficient in the field to insure him the victory against any number, however superior, of the unpracticed Italian militia, would be lost in the mob-fight of the narrow streets of the city ; more especially against a people who for many centuries had been accustomed to fight with unequalled courage and address in this tumultuous manner. He had had, moreover, a foretaste of such a contest but a few days before, when a trifling difference between certain of the soldiers of his camp and a few of the citizens had been decided by arms, and though the terrible Swiss guard had been concerned on the side of the former, the latter were thought to have come off with the advantage. It may also have been known to Charles that great provision had been made for reinforcing the city from without its walls, although he certainly was not aware of the extent of the provision. That, however, which no doubt more than all inclined the king to peace, was the little success of his attempt to restore the outlawed Piero, in whom he had hoped to place a guard upon the conquered city when he should pursue his march towards Naples. In this view he had written to him ; but Piero turned

to the senate of Venice for counsel, and received such as it suited the policy of her senators to give. He was advised to doubt the professions of friendship which came from a king who had so lately been his enemy, and whose interests he had always opposed; at the same time he was unofficially assured, that at a more propitious moment Venice herself would restore him to his fortunes and his power. The timidity of Piero was persuaded, and thus the communication which Charles had opened with him suddenly ceased. Even to all these motives must yet be added another reason, which we may believe, from the general character of the invading prince, to have exercised its just influence—the admiration excited in the breast of a chivalric leader by a display of daring and resolution equal to his own. Piero Capponi was therefore recalled, and terms more equal were offered to him as commissioner on the part of the citizens.

The basis of the treaty recognized the city as an ally of France, whose king was bound to afford her protection; and all the details of the agreement were in accordance with this principle. Thus the fortresses which had been delivered up to Charles were to remain in his hands for all military purposes during the time of his actual presence in Italy for the conquest of Naples; but the civil and fiscal concerns of all the places so rendered, were to be still under the sole government of Florence and her Signory. Upon her part, the city was to remove its sentence of confiscation and outlawry against the Medici, who, however, were forbidden to return on pain of its renewal; Piero, within less than a hundred miles of the territory of Florence, and his brothers within less than the same distance from the capital. These articles being solemnly sworn to upon either side, the king, after a residence of ten days, from the 17th to the 27th of November, began his march from Florence towards the South,

and was received at Siena with every demonstration of favour.

From Siena Charles pursued his march towards Rome, receiving on his way the submission of all the cities of Tuscany, secured by his treaty with Florence. His approach to the city of the Church was learned there with a diversity of feelings. The pope, Alexander VI., had rendered himself by his vices obnoxious even to the greater part of his ecclesiastical dependents; and the arrival of Charles was welcomed by these as a means of effecting a reformation by the call of a council for the deposition of Alexander, whose crimes had given ample cause to justify even a measure so violent, and whose opposition to the French had afforded them a fair opportunity of proceeding against him to any lengths. The necessity of a prompt and vigorous action against the Neapolitan princes saved the trembling prelate from this probable danger. Charles satisfied himself with obtaining possession of such fortresses as seemed requisite for the conduct of his military affairs, and promising not to interfere in the concerns of the Church, made his formal entrance into Rome at the moment at which the duke of Calabria was making his hurried escape from an opposite gate.

The affairs of the kingdom now became desperate. Neither Ferdinand nor Alphonso had ever endeavoured to fortify themselves against danger from invasion by securing the affection of their subjects. The reigns of both had been a continuous series of treacheries, oppressive wars, and cruelties. They had kept no faith with their subjects, and the retributive hour demonstrated that their subjects had preserved no fealty to them. While all the rest of Italy, awed by the terror of the foreign soldiery, had assumed a cold neutrality, the Neapolitans themselves ran with ardour to embrace the cause of their invader, rendering his march to their throne a procession rather than a contest.

Alphonso, finding resistance vain, or rather, we should say, deprived of every means of resistance, resolved to abdicate ; and declaring that he no longer demanded allegiance from his former subjects, implored their fidelity to his son, whom he now offered them for their sovereign. This measure, which the amiable qualities of the young prince might have made of some avail if taken earlier, was now without effect. Alphonso having retired to a convent in Sicily, died before the expiration of the year ; and his unfortunate son, unable to sustain the weight of the public odium excited by two generations of tyranny and oppression, was obliged to fly before the victorious arms of the happier Charles. This monarch, now without a competitor, took possession of the throne of Naples, and received the oath of fidelity from a people remarkable for their love of political change, and for the slight importance which they have always attached to the obligation of the bond they were now in the act of assuming with acclamations of joy.

While the invasion of Charles was thus attaining the end for which it had been devised, it had become the means of effecting many changes in Italy no less important than the subversion of the Aragonese dynasty of Naples, though not contemplated by the invading prince. Giovanni, Cosimo, Piero, and Lorenzo de' Medici, had fixed upon Florence by four generations of inherited power the rule of a family as sovereign, which, in ordinary circumstances, neither the crimes nor the weakness of their successor would have been sufficient to destroy. The coming of Charles had effected, however, by a result unexpected to himself, what, perhaps, if meditated, might not have been so easy of accomplishment, and what Florence herself, if she even desired it, had ceased to expect. He had subverted the Medicean influence in the accidental expulsion of Piero, and restored to the citizens the choice and model of their government. They had still re-

tained the name of a republican people, and many indulged the belief that this might prove a favourable moment for the vindication of that name, and for the restoration of the institutions, which had not only distinguished them from every other people of Italy, but which had characterised them as eminent in prosperity, genius, and virtue.

At the moment, however, that many were anxiously bent upon the restoration of the republic, many also considered the downfall of Piero but as a proper occasion for the exaltation of other families, kept only from the sovereignty before by the successful usurpation of the Medici. These, though fewer in number than the advocates of the republic, were, as might be expected, more dexterous in the conduct of their plans. They first proposed to the people the exercise of their sovereign right in the formation of a *Balia* to reform the government. Deceived by this acknowledgment of their ultimate supremacy, the multitude proceeded to select a *Balia* of twenty, who should, by the old method of *imborsation*, re-establish the republican institutions. In the number of these to whom the people had thus too suddenly delegated that power which they had so recently regained, was the exiled Lorenzo. On the flight of his kinsman he had returned to Florence, and assumed, in token at once of his hatred of the family which he had had in common with the tyrant, and of his devotion to the rights of the citizens, the name of *Popolani* in exchange for that of *Medici*. Another individual, chosen from among the most powerful and influential families of the city, was Paolo Antonio Soderini. No sooner did this commission find itself in possession of the uncontrolled direction exercised by a *Balia*, than its members began to disclose the motives by which they were actuated. Soderini, finding himself there in a minority, and the majority on the point of transferring the liberties of the city to a new master, abandoned his place in the *Balia*; and passing over to

the side of those who had contended for the restoration of the republic, added greatly to their strength. While the city was in this confusion, the peculiar talents of an individual who had some time before begun to distinguish himself, were brought into exercise, and tended greatly to increase the popular excitement.

Savonarola, the singular hero of the political vicissitudes of this new era in Florentine history, was not himself by birth a Florentine. The son of a Paduan gentleman residing in Ferrara, he was born in that city about the year 1452, and at the age of twenty-two, without the knowledge of his parents, he had assumed the habit of a Dominican in the city of Bologna. The fame of his sanctity and of his learning, or, it is possible, of his remarkable talent, caused him to become known to Lorenzo at the moment when, having firmly and finally established his rule, that fortunate leader was directing his care, after the manner of Augustus, to the illustration of his court and reign. Invited to Florence by this magnificent patron, he soon attained the highest honours which his mode of life and his profession allowed; but no hope of advancement, no flattering demonstration of favour, could win him to attach himself personally to the palace of Lorenzo, or to lend, by his attendance and sanction, a new support to the usurpation which his heart rejected and his reason condemned. In the quality of founder of the convent over which Savonarola presided as Prior, Lorenzo de' Medici was a frequent visitor to its gardens and public halls; but even on such occasions he could not prevail upon the obstinate friar to favour him with an interview. The example of all Italy did not affect the pride or the virtuous contempt of Savonarola. While the high and the low considered it not degrading to beg admittance to the presence of the great dispenser of public and private honours in Florence, this single individual at the sound of his approach retired to his inmost cell, and there indulged the prayers

of the impostor or the enthusiast against the subverter of the common liberty. Even while the popular favour rendered it both dangerous and useless to declaim in public against the authority usurped by Lorenzo, the sturdy democrat could not be led in his private conversations to disguise the hostility which he nourished in hopelessness towards the idol of the populace. The death of Lorenzo and the accession of a so much less respected person as Piero inspired him with new hope ; but when the flight of that rejected despot opened once again the lips that had long been fastened in silence, in vindication of the common freedom, the zealous eloquence of Savonarola burst upon the citizens with a fervour and an impetuosity that left them no time for reflection, and hurried them into all the measures which to his excited passions seemed no less feasible than just. In the balancing of parties, while yet it seemed undecided which scale should preponderate, the weight of such an influence thrown into the popular side determined the question. With the shrewdness belonging to his profession, he could not be deceived by the artifice which had been practiced on the citizens, in affording them the privilege of establishing a Balìa, to transfer their liberties again to some aspiring individual. He declared that the people, in conferring such unlimited power, had created twenty tyrants in the first exercise of their recovered liberty ; and mingling with the sacred names which his profession made familiar to his tongue, and which his eloquence had made even terrible to his hearers, the no less holy cause in which he had engaged his soul, he succeeded in rendering his political opinions a part of the religion with which he penetrated the hearts and minds of his hearers. Persuaded by his earnestness that nothing less than the eternal Providence had led to this opportunity of restoring the republic, and that the will of heaven required its re-establishment, the populace, under the direction of its spiritual and political guide,

without regret proceeded to the demolition of their former work and annihilated the *Balia*. Savonarola next ordered the formation of a council to consist of eight hundred and thirty citizens who had passed the age of thirty years, and whose reputations stood unblemished before their fellows. From this council were to be chosen the officers of the city and the republic. Savonarola had found it easier to induce the people to this step, and, indeed, to yield a blind and absolute assent to all his views, from the circumstance that they had already conceived an idea of him as of a prophet sent at once for their instruction and regeneration. "He evinced at the same time," says Sismondi, "an ardent love of mankind, deep respect for the rights of all, great sensibility, and an elevated mind. Though a zealous reformer of the church, and in this respect a precursor of Luther, who was destined to begin his mission twenty years later, he did not quit the pale of orthodoxy; he did not assume the right of examining doctrine; he limited his efforts to the restoration of discipline, the reformation of the morals of the clergy, and the recall of priests, as well as other citizens, to the practice of the gospel precepts: but his zeal was mixed with enthusiasm; he believed himself under the immediate inspiration of Providence; he took his own impulses for prophetic revelations, by which he directed the politics of his disciples, the *Piagnoni*. He had predicted to the Florentines the coming of the French into Italy; he had represented to them Charles VIII. as an instrument by which the Divinity designed to chastise the crimes of the nation; he had counselled them to remain faithful to their alliance with that king, the instrument of Providence, even though his conduct, especially in reference to the affairs of Pisa, had been highly culpable." A new and magnificent building was erected to contain this council, consisting of more than all the former officers of the republic, since it had been after its first erection increased until it came at

last to consist of 1755 persons. The rapidity with which this edifice was constructed seemed to Savonarola a mark of the continued favour of heaven, by whose dictation the council had been created ; and he did not hesitate to declare that the angels of the Most High had taken part in the erection of the proud dome which was to be the seat of the proudest and the noblest work of human genius—the upright representation of an enlightened community under a free constitution.

While Florence was thus engaged in the more important care of restoring her civil and political institutions to the purity which had been long unknown to them, her citizens had hoped that the same fortune might attend the management of their foreign relations. King Charles had succeeded in accomplishing the object of his invasion, and those who had been compelled to aid in its completion, had now a right to demand the restitution of those places which had been put for his greater security in the hands of his officers. Among the rest, the magistrates of Florence, in the name of their citizens, expected to be reinstated in the undisputed possession of Sarzana, Sarzanella, and Pisa. On the other hand Charles had, at least by implication, consented to the revolt of the Pisans, and it would now become a difficult and delicate undertaking to reconcile the jarring claims which the people of the revolted city and the magistracy of Florence might seem to have upon his equity and public faith. Irresolute as to the course which policy might dictate, and certain that on either side he must expose himself to merited blame, the monarch hesitated ; but his officers and soldiers, less scrupulous than their sovereign, and feeling their interest in maintaining the intestine dissensions of Italy, were easily gained to sustain the quarrel of the rebellious Pisans. The cause of both parties, argued before the king, resulted in nothing but the assurance that justice should be accorded to each ;

and the Florentines were left to recover possession of Pisa by such means as they could themselves supply, while the Pisans, assisted openly by the soldiers of the royal army, by the Sane, the Genoese, and the Lucchese, and secretly by the advice and encouragement of Ludovico, were permitted to maintain their liberties if by such aid they should find themselves able to do so. This was obviously to be their last struggle, and they resolved to sustain it with fortitude. The Florentines, to recover their rule without resort to a doubtful encounter, were willing to make concessions to their revolted subjects. They offered to extend to Pisa certain commercial privileges, such as the liberty of working in silk and in woollens, privileges withheld from their subject cities; but the hope of re-acquiring an absolute independence, or the fear, perhaps, that such extorted privileges were but to remain to them so long as their own arms and those of their allies might impose upon the sovereign city, and the long hatred of the Florentine name, augmented by the cruelty of its government, made vain the efforts of Florence for the peaceful recovery of her valued dependency. Even later, when Charles upon his way through Tuscany again received and heard the commissioners of the two cities, he found it impossible to adjust the difference which his coming had excited; and his departure from Italy, which did not occur till some time afterwards, still left the contest to be decided by arms.

But while the capital of Tuscany was thus engaged for the reintegration of her state and empire, the other cities and governments of Italy were struck with consternation at the irresistible advances of the foreign prince towards universal dominion in the Peninsula. The fortresses abandoned as pledges to his possession in his progress towards the South, and still retained when the conquest of Naples had been effected, appeared to them as so many *points d'appui* in its con-

templated and already commenced subjugation. Of all to whom this new condition of things was most displeasing, Ludovico began to entertain the deepest apprehensions. The claims of Charles, which his reckless ambition had put on foot, and to which he himself had opened the passage into Italy, were not more valid to the throne of Naples than those of the duke of Orleans to the ducal crown of Milan. In addition to the fears which the already whispered pretensions of the Orleannois excited in the bosom of Ludovico, there were other deeply interesting feelings at work in his mind to turn him from the cause of his ally. He now found himself farther than ever from the possession of all that he had hoped to gain by the aid and influence of Charles. Pisa, the first object of his desires, had escaped his snares, and bid fair to prove as hostile to his rule as Florence herself. Bound by no principle to the interests of Charles, the expulsion of that prince from Italy became, in this posture of affairs, an object of the first importance to his plans of future aggrandizement. No scruples were permitted to interfere with this change in his views; and all the energy which had formerly been employed to allure the invading army beyond the limits of its native country, were put in exercise to crush it now, as useless or prejudicial to the schemes of the unprincipled chief by whom it had been called into the field. Venice, in all the progress of Charles through Italy, had preserved a strict neutrality; she had allowed him to fix himself by undisputed conquest, and victory gained after victory, in the heart of the Peninsula; but now, no less terrified than Ludovico, she began to feel that the security of that peace, in which her wealth was continually augmenting to the wonder and admiration of the world, might be too dearly bought. The increase of these natural and well-founded terrors spreading over many other states, at last induced a formal league for the expulsion or the destruction of Charles and his army.

Ludovico wanted but the shadow of an excuse, and the fearless character of Charles soon furnished him with one, for an open desertion.

At Venice, in which city the ambassadors of the frightened states convened, the pope, the duke of Milan, the king and queen of Spain, and the king of the Romans, by their representatives agreed with the Venetians on the necessity of adopting measures for the safety of Italy, over which Charles had travelled with the rapidity and the devastating power of lightning. Many cities not represented in this congress were invited to take part in the measures proposed for the general defence, and Florence of course received the most flattering overtures. Still mindful, however, of the treachery of Ludovico and the cost of Charles' enmity, that city, by her magistrates, refused to concur in the general movement, fearing, it was thought, to strengthen the reluctance of the foreign prince to the restoration of the citadel and fortresses of Pisa, Pietra-Santa, and Sarzanella.

"In the meanwhile," observes Guicciardini, who lived in the midst of these tumultuous scenes, "the credit of the French was by this time very much sunk in the kingdom of Naples; for, by giving themselves up to diversions, and leaving the government to chance, they had neglected to expel the Arragonians from the few places they possessed, which might have easily been compassed had they pursued their good fortune. Many reasons contributed to increase the people's discontent; for although the king had given marks of his generosity on several occasions, by granting in all parts of the kingdom such privileges and exemptions as would have lessened the royal revenue above two hundred thousand crowns a year, yet other matters were not ordered with the prudence that was necessary. Charles was naturally very indolent, and left the management of all weighty affairs to his ministers, who, either through ignorance or avarice, threw

every thing into confusion : the barons were not treated with the respect due to their rank, nor rewarded according to their merit, unless by accident ; they were admitted with difficulty to the king's presence ; no regard was paid to the different degrees of quality ; and no pains taken to confirm the disaffection of those who were already ill-disposed towards the Arragonians. Many difficulties were raised to protract the restitution of the forfeited estates that had been taken from those of the Anjouin faction and other barons expelled by old Ferdinando. No favours were bestowed without bribes, and many persons, without reason, were displaced ; posts of profit, and most of the crown lands, were distributed amongst the French, to the great mortification of the Neapolitans. This unexpected treatment had entirely alienated the affections of the people, and converted their former affection into violent hatred ; and, on the contrary, their aversion to the Arragonians was turned into esteem. They compassionated Ferdinando, from whose virtue they had reason to have expected great achievements : they called to mind his last speech, delivered with so much mildness and resolution : in fine, they wanted nothing but an opportunity to replace on the throne that family, to whose destruction they had so lately contributed. Even the odious name of Alfonso was now become agreeable. .

“The king, before the forming of the above-mentioned league, was determined to return into France, more out of levity and to please his courtiers, who vehemently wished it, than out of any prudent motive ; for in his new kingdom many important affairs were not yet settled, nor could the victory be deemed complete till the whole was subdued. When the articles of this new confederacy came to the king's knowledge, they gave him a great deal of uneasiness. His council was of opinion they should hasten their departure for France, where alone they could make suitable pre-

parations. But Charles met with unforeseen accidents; for his army being dispersed over the kingdom, he found he had not a sufficient force to conduct him to Asti through the allied army, and it was necessary to leave part of his forces behind him to secure his new acquisitions: but the safety of his person being his chiefest care, he provided but indifferently for the preservation of his conquest, and left only one half of the Swiss, part of the infantry, eight hundred French lances, and about five hundred Italians, who had been enlisted by the prefect of Rome, by Prospero and Fabritio Colonna, and Antoncello Savelli. On the 20th day of May, the king left Naples, taking with him eight hundred lances, a guard of two hundred gentlemen, Trivulzi with a hundred lances, three thousand Swiss, a thousand French, and a thousand Gascons, giving orders to Camillo Vitelli and his brother to join him in Tuscany with two hundred and fifty men-at-arms, and for the fleet to return to Leghorn. All this while the affairs of the allies in Lombardy advanced very briskly. Ludovico had received from Cæsar, with great solemnity, the investiture of the duchy of Milan, paid homage in public to his ambassadors, and taken the oath of fidelity. The duke, in concert with the Venetians, had made great preparations to obstruct the king's return into France, or at least to secure the duchy of Milan, through which he was to pass; they both made new levies of men-at-arms, to be maintained, part at their separate expense and part in common: and, though with some difficulty, they prevailed on Giovanni Bentivoglio to accept a salary from both, on his obliging the city of Bologna to declare for the league."

It was not difficult to foresee that Charles could not retain for any length of time the conquests which he had acquired with such unexpected ease. The formation of a northern league at the moment of his declining popularity in the South, could scarcely there-

fore be a cause of astonishment even to himself; but the success of such a league, though it might not even be problematical, could not restore to Italy her former condition, by making her independent, as she had been before, of popular revolutions and cabinet intrigues beyond the Alps.*

Florence, as we have already seen, had refused to unite in the effort which the common interests of Italy required for the expulsion of the invading army, that had become in a great measure to resemble a predatory troop of freebooters rather than the disciplined soldiery of a powerful prince. Yet not even this desertion of her former principles and of the common cause could win for Florence the favour of him for whom she had made such a sacrifice. With a disaffected province in his rear, and the army of the league continually increasing on the borders of Lombardy, the only safety of Charles depended upon the party which the hope of his assistance might secure him in Tuscany. The revolted Pisans stood just in this relation to him in this very critical moment; and the ambiguous aid which he offered them, while it did not make Florence his enemy, secured to him a certain retreat

* "The invasion of the French not only spread terror from one extremity of Italy to the other, but changed the whole policy of that country, by rendering it dependent upon that of the Transalpine nations. While Charles VIII. pretended to be the legitimate heir of the kingdom of Naples, the duke of Orleans, who succeeded him under the name of Louis XII., called himself heir to the duchy of Milan. Maximilian, ambitious as he was inconsistent, claimed in the states of Italy prerogatives to which no emperor had pretended since the death of Frederick II. in 1250. The Swiss had learnt, at the same time, that at the foot of their mountains there lay rich and feeble cities which they might pillage, and a delicious climate, which offered all the enjoyments of life; they saw neighbouring monarchs ready to pay them for exercising there their brigandage. Finally, Ferdinand and Isabella, monarchs of Aragon and Castile, announced their intention of defending the bastard branch of Aragon, which reigned at Naples. But, already masters of Sicily, they purposed passing the strait, and were secretly in treaty with Charles VIII. to divide with him the spoils of the relative whom they pretended to defend."—*Sismondi*.

in case of any sinister result on the side of Naples or Milan. Its port at the same time rendered him master of the coast, and opened him, in case of necessity, a communication with his kingdom of France.

Having established his relative Gilbert de Montpensier as viceroy of Naples, and left the Pisans in charge of the chevalier Entragues, Charles now prepared to take up his march for the evacuation of Italy; and pursuing his way to Lombardy, entered the Apennines at Pontremoli in the Lunigiana. Having sacked this place against the public faith on which he had been permitted to enter it, he continued his march towards the rapid stream, or rather torrent, of the Taro, on the opposite side of which the army of the league was drawn up to oppose him. Italy had long been unacquainted with the art of war as practised by the ferocious soldiery with which her children were now to contend. Thirty-five thousand men in arms, however, had been by some means assembled together; and the hope of a plentiful booty, added to the security which they felt in the immense superiority of their numbers, gave to the common troops an eagerness scarcely expected by their leaders. To Charles a speedy passage into his own dominions was of paramount importance. However much, therefore, his adventurous spirit would perhaps have been pleased by the opportunity of engaging with this superior force, whose superiority, consisting in numbers alone, could have had no terrors for him, he found himself compelled to restrain his impetuosity, and to content himself with simply demanding an unobstructed passage out of Italy. The *Proveditori*,* on the part of the Venetians, desirous of liberating the Italian states upon the easiest terms from his formidable presence, were anxious to accede to his wish, and urged the refraining from every act of hostility. The opposite opinion, however,

* The *Proveditori* were kept as a species of honourable spies, or as checks upon its generals, by the Venetian senate.

prevailed ; the freedom of the passage was denied, and either party prepared to settle the question by the sword and by the fortune of war. On the 6th of July, 1495, this memorable battle was fought by twelve thousand French and Swiss against nearly three times that number of Italians, hirelings or slaves of the petty princes who had usurped the sovereignty of their states. In the time of the republics a few cities of Lombardy had defeated the ambition of the German emperors, when men like Barbarossa and Frederic II. wore the imperial crown ; and later still, but yet in the name of liberty and the republic, Florence alone had kept her unbarred gates against the leaguering force of German Henry. On this occasion, after an obstinate contest the army of the league declared itself victorious, and set up the helmet of king Charles as a trophy ; while Venice, for the honour of her arms, returned, in public shows and triumphs, thanksgivings for her victory. Yet the grounds upon which Charles asserted his claim to all the honours of success cannot be disputed ; while three thousand Italians remained dead upon the field, his force had been diminished by but one third of that number, and, unmolested by the enemy, he had soon afterwards proceeded on his march.*

The glory of the French arms, carried in this conflict to the highest pitch, and justifying in some degree the awe with which they had inspired the Italians, was destined to receive a check almost immediately after. Misguided by their adherents, the French had been induced to make an attempt upon Genoa. A total failure on this occasion, and the capture of the

* " Charles the next morning marched his army before day-break, without sound of trumpet, to conceal, as much as possible, his departure. The allies did not stir that day, nor could they well have pursued them on account of the waters, as more heavy rains had fallen that night, and made the river impassable the best part of the day."—*Guicciardini*.

troop by means of which the reduction of this important city had been contemplated, destroyed the cause of Charles in Italy, and rendered his successful resistance at the Taro in all probability the preservation of his life. In Naples, matters had been conducted even more unfortunately. Ferdinand had made a descent upon the coast, and been received by large bodies of his father's subjects who flocked to his standard. In this attempt for the recovery of his throne the gallant prince was attended by Gonsalvo de Cordova, whose exploits against the Moors in Spain had made him famous before the world, and fitted him in reputation and opinion as an antagonist for the conquering French. After some time the royal city of Naples fell into the hands of the young prince, and restored, though on a feeble and unsettled foundation, the empire of the bastard line of Aragon.

CHAPTER IV.

Piero de' Medici attempts to re-enter the City.—Trial and Execution of his Friends.—Savonarola excommunicated.—Condemned and put to Death.—War with Pisa.—Death of Ludovico Sforza.—Affairs of the Church.—Lucretia Borgia.—Piero Soderini, Gonfalonier.—Death of Alexander VI.—Succeeded by Pius III.—Election of the Cardinal della Rovere to the Papacy.—Surrender of Pisa.—League of Cambray.—Return of the Medici to Florence.

CHARLES in the meanwhile had reached the city of Asti in Piedmont. Here he was visited by delegates from the Florentine republic, who claimed the restoration of Pisa according to former stipulation, and which the king under various pretences had delayed, until, having passed the army of the league and joined his friends in Asti, he should no longer need the Tuscan fortresses as places of refuge in which to fortify

himself against the enemies that threatened him from the North. Even then, when these reasons no longer operated to make the possession of Pisa necessary to the safety of Charles, he could not bear the thought of restoring a people who, relying on his faith, and partly for his sake, had thrown off the yoke of a galling slavery into the hands of their irritated oppressors. He still found, therefore, pretexts for delay, and the Florentines still beheld themselves compelled to carry on a war of skirmishes for the reduction of the outposts which fortified the city of their rebels, when suddenly the order arrived for the transfer of the Pisan citadel to the hands of the Florentine magistracy. Pisa had not excited the anger of the Florentines by this rebellion, to return at the bidding of Charles into the power of her hated enemy. She knew, moreover, that his only motive for abandoning her was the fear that she might fall into the hands of the Venetian senate or of some other party to the league; and that so long as she preserved her independence, if she might not look to him for support, she had no reason to dread him as an enemy. The very terms of his treaty with Florence had shown the interest which he still took in her affairs, by an express stipulation introduced for the protection of her citizens.* The commander of the

* The articles of this treaty were, "that, without any delay, all the towns and forts of the Florentines should be restored; they obliging themselves, at the end of two years, on a valuable consideration, to deliver up, if the king should require it, Pietra Santa and Sarzana to the Genocse, provided the city of Genoa should, at that time, be under his majesty's command: that the ambassadors should pay down the thirty thousand ducats agreed upon in the capitulation at Florence: that at the time they were given up they should lend the king seven thousand ducats; for the payment of which the generals of the kingdom of France should be bound: that, provided they were not engaged in a war in Tuscany, they should send two hundred and fifty men-at-arms into the kingdom of Naples: that the Pisans should have a general indemnity, and the Florentines should begin immediately to restore their effects, and give some encouragement for their improvement in arts and sciences: that for a security of the performance of these articles, they should send six hostages, of the principal citizens of Florence at the king's choice, who should remain for a certain time at his court."—*Guiciardini*.

French soldiery left for their protection, or for some other secret cause which had actuated the king in all his measures concerning the restoration of the Florentine fortresses, encouraged them in this belief, by refusing to surrender the citadel over which he had been placed even to the order of Charles himself.

The year 1496 brought to Italy a perfect freedom from all foreign arms. Charles had crossed the mountains, and left the Italians to settle among themselves the differences which his coming had created.* Florence, indeed, had the condition of the times and the character of her people permitted her to turn her advantages to account, might seem to have gained by his invasion. But the opportunity of erecting a republic in Italy, to moderate between the jarring interests of the various parts and of the different governments, had been swallowed up in the important political revolutions which had annihilated the whole system of Italian politics, and made the states of Italy dependent on the vicissitudes of nations and governments with which she had no reciprocal influence. The only advantage, therefore, which the coming of the French had appeared to offer to Florence, had been but a deceitful hope, to be weighed against the actual loss of territory and the exciting of a war of petty skirmishes for the recovery of her most valuable dependencies and important frontiers. Such was the commencement of her contest for the reduction of Pisa, till the Venetians, coming to the aid of that city, compelled her, with some danger to herself, to assume the defen-

* "About the end of October 1495, Charles returned over the mountains, more like a vanquished than a victorious prince. He left in Asti, which he gave out he had bought of the duke of Orleans, five hundred French lances under Gianjacopo Trivulzi, but the duke was not able with all his authority to keep them from following the king a few days after his departure. In this manner Charles quitted Italy, without making any other provision for the kingdom of Naples, than the ships that were arming at Genoa and Provence, and the money and aid promised by the Florentines."—*Guicciardini*.

sive. With Venice were joined on the side of the revolted city all the princes of the league, besides the powerful aid and influential name of the German Maximilian. Still the historian scarcely finds the record of a single encounter of arms that deserves to be copied, either for the importance of its results or the interest of its attendant circumstances, unless we except the attempt of the Florentines to recover possession of Sojana—an attempt that cost them the life of their most illustrious citizen, Piero Capponi. Acting as Florentine commissary, he was giving directions for the opening of a battery upon this insignificant place, when he was struck by a random shot and instantly killed. “Too ignoble a death for so brave a commander; who, if destined to meet his fate in the field, deserved to fall in some more considerable action; for the taking of this mean place was of little importance.” This, indeed, is a brief eulogium for a man like Piero Capponi. Three families alone had for successive generations divided the admiration and the sympathy of Florence,—the Albizzi, the Medici, and the Capponi. Of these, the first had been remarkable for their aristocratic pride, for the general corruption of the democratic institutions over which they had unfortunately and unfitly been called to preside; but they deserve yet more, a notoriety greater than that which they have acquired, for the opportunities afforded by their ill-advised hostility for the exercise of the specious tyranny of the Medici, still greater enemies to liberty; the Medici, availing themselves of these opportunities, attained that evil eminence which has made them too long the admiration of the inconsiderate and the merely learned; but the Capponi stand through three generations as the unalterable supporters of their country’s rights, the advocates of her dearest privileges, and the disinterested champions of her liberties. The names of Giovanni, Cosimo, and Lorenzo de’ Medici, awake nothing of the generous feeling that the virtues of Gino, Neri, and

Piero Capponi, excite in the bosoms of every lover of his country and his kind.

During all the period that had elapsed from the forming of the league, the Florentines had stood in opposition to those who were parties to it, and without the favour of a single prince in Italy. They had also been looked upon as enemies of the emperor, who had availed himself of the new state of the Peninsular affairs to introduce the German influence into its interests. Finding the authority of his name insufficient to effect the peace of Italy by attaching Florence to the league, he resolved to try the experiment of a personal address, and scantily attended, in such a manner as to excite but little of fear or respect, he passed through the Lombard cities to the seat of war in Tuscany. Here, after having vainly endeavoured to possess himself of Leghorn, he learned the little value of the imperial title unsustained by arms, and found himself compelled to abandon an enterprize which he had hoped by the influence of his crown and sceptre to accomplish almost without resistance.

In the meanwhile the citizens of Florence had slight cause for self-gratulation. The vicissitudes of the past seasons had not allowed the leisure required for the ordinary cares of the labourer and the husbandman. The supplies had, therefore, in a great measure failed, and the evils of famine threatened to be added to those which still arose from an unsettled policy within, and an expensive and unprofitable war without. Crowds of starving beggars from the country now thronged to the capital, and claimed a portion of the charity that the wealthy extended to the famished inhabitants; and that still fell widely short of the demand. The streets were filled with the dying and the dead; and even the affluent began to apprehend the possibility of perishing for want of bread, in the midst of their valueless, uncounted stores.

The hopes of Florence were at this moment sus-

tained by the enthusiasm of Savonarola. He exhorted the people to bear the inflictions of Providence with fortitude, and assured them that that Providence would not long withhold its bounty. In the midst of these alternate fears and hopes, while a procession of the populace under the direction of this enthusiast was marching to offer up its vows of pious resignation and humble intreaty, a courier arrived with the intelligence of the disembarkation of the French, who had brought with them the supplies for want of which the city had been upon the point of perishing. The pious multitude, first depositaries of the information of this little less than miraculous arrival, communicated it to the city at large; and Savonarola, perhaps himself deceived, now began to think himself divinely commissioned to watch over and instruct the citizens of the regenerate republic.

While every thing appeared, however, to augur so well for the prosperity of the popular interests, the deeply rooted mischief which had undermined the character of the people themselves, and which had owed its origin to the Albizzi and the Medici, was now again at work to counteract and render vain the temporary impulse given, by the expulsion of Piero, to the ancient principles and party of the democracy. From the moment of their expulsion the Medici had not ceased to look forward to their restoration as an inevitable necessity rather than as a possible contingency. Their first attempt had nevertheless been a total failure, and without in the least abandoning their expectations or their designs, they found themselves compelled to await the offer of some opportunity on which they calculated with perfect security as a consequence of the division of parties and the diversity of counsels within the walls of the city. A variety of circumstances, in the succeeding year 1496, appeared to favour these expectations of the exiled family. "At the moment when Florence expelled the Medici, that republic was

bandied between three different parties. The first was that of the enthusiasts, directed by Girolamo Savonarola; who promised the miraculous protection of the Divinity for the reform of the church and the establishment of liberty. These demanded a democratic constitution,—they were called the *Piagnoni*. The second consisted of men who had shared power with the Medici, but who had separated from them; who wished to possess alone the powers and profits of government, and who endeavoured to amuse the people by dissipations and pleasures, in order to establish at their ease an aristocracy,—these were called the *Arabbiati*. The third party was composed of men who remained faithful to the Medici, but not daring to declare themselves, lived in retirement,—they were called *Bigi*."

At this moment the party of the *Piagnoni* so greatly predominated as to be able to advance the faction of the Medici, which, waiting its opportunity, and attaching itself in the meanwhile as the occasion might direct, had lent itself to the views of Savonarola and his partizans or disciples. Its forbearance was early rewarded; very many of its members were admitted to a participation in the highest offices; and Bernardo del Neri, one of the most devoted friends of the exiled family, was chosen Gonfalonier. The prudence of his followers was not imitated by Piero. He longed for a return to power, and believing that the elevation of Neri indicated a change of policy in the city, favourable to his cause, encouraged by the Sanese and the duke of Milan, he appeared with a little army of 3000 foot and 800 horse at daybreak before the gates of the city. Whatever hopes he might himself have entertained, it cannot be supposed that Ludovico and the people of Siena had expected with this little troop to effect the forcible reduction of Florence. Neither is it probable that they had suffered themselves to be deceived by Piero, as that individual had allowed himself to be deceived by his wishes and his hopes in re-

gard to the reviving popularity of the Medici among the citizens; but they were not sorry to encourage the expectation of a general rising in favour of Piero, as a means of harassing the city and dividing its councils upon this important question of its domestic interests. When Piero, therefore, persuaded that his appearance before the walls with a show of support would excite an insurrection against the newly-established order, they did not refuse such aid as might be sufficient for the accomplishment of his purpose in case that any accident should occur to render it practicable, or for the defence of his person in case, as they no doubt expected, that he should find the people opposed to his return.

In the meanwhile, in spite of the precautions of Piero, the information of his approach had been carried to the city too early for his partizans to take such measures as would have been requisite even had the people been more inclined to receive him. Yet a momentary terror appears to have seized upon some of the officers belonging to the new government. A certain Benivieni, full of consternation, rushed into the presence of Savonarola exclaiming that the enemy was approaching unresisted, and that he was about to possess himself of the city. The preacher, looking at him with a smile of encouragement and of reproof at the same time, replied in the familiar language of his profession, and which might appear as a wilful imposition if we had not in our own history an evidence of the power of religious zeal and obstinate habit in religious differences, to mislead the zealot into all the extravagancies of madness. It is impossible to believe for an instant that the language of the Scotch covenanters, in the days of their struggle and their partial and temporary success, was intended to impose by deceiving, or that it did so impose upon any but themselves. In the same spirit Savonarola, no doubt, assumed the prophet, not convinced himself whether his

speech were the consequence of a firm and pious faith, relying on the divine justice for the protection and vindication of the just, or whether it were not the actual prompting of the immediate inspiration of heaven. His answer was, at all events, ready ; and to one to whom it was not ridiculous, it may have proved sublime. "Oh thou of little faith," was all his reply ; and Benivieni, sufficiently re-assured by this confident tone of the monk, returned to impart new hope to his friends. Savonarola in this instance acted the prophet at very little risk of failing in his prophecy. He had, we may easily suppose, from his influence in the government and with the populace, himself received the earliest intelligence of the approach of Piero, and participated in the precautionary measures taken for the preservation of the republic.

Deceived in his expectation of the popular favour, Piero had now to turn his care to the means of escape which were still reserved to him. As he had ever been the first to avoid the danger of any encounter which might by possibility become of doubtful consequence to his person, he now perceived no other security than that which presented itself in flight. The dread of his retreat being obstructed or cut off, rendered the contingency of the city's favour, on which he had insisted so strongly before, an impossibility. He had, therefore, no longer a thought beyond his personal safety, and the territory of the commonwealth was quickly relieved from the presence of this enemy. No sooner, however, did the citizens discover themselves to have escaped this peril, than they put themselves upon the inquiry which it naturally suggested, as to the encouragement which the Medici had received from their party dwelling within the walls of the city.

We have seen a conspiracy of the Florentines, in which a numerous and miscellaneous class united for the restoration of the republican institutions, corrupted or violated by successive generations of the Medici—

we have seen the failure of this conspiracy, and the death of the greater number of all concerned in its success ; but we have not discovered a single individual for a moment contemplating the betrayal of his companions while the end was yet to be decided, or willing, when it was no longer in doubt, to purchase his own safety at the expense of one of his comrades. Is there any one who can hesitate to ascribe this absence of all selfish fear, this rare fidelity, to the powerful influence of the sacred cause in which they had engaged their fortunes and their lives ? It was not now possible that any thing, except such selfish fear, should assure the parties to this conspiracy against a nation's liberty, of the fidelity one to the other. Yet this was for a brief moment sufficient. While many were desirous, perhaps, of securing their own immunity by the treacherous sacrifice of their accomplices, all were afraid of acknowledging themselves partners in a conspiracy which must have closed against them every bosom's sympathy, and made them scarcely entitled to the observance of the public faith engaged to them for their double treachery. One individual at last was found to brave the common scorn in the hope of preserving his life. The information of this individual implicated with Bernardo del Neri a great many others of the greatest consideration in Florence, who were arrested and put at once upon trial for their offence. An extraordinary council of 160 of the principal citizens having been instituted for the examination of this cause, with little difference of opinion after a patient hearing condemned the accused, and passed upon the four most criminal, sentence of death. From this sentence appeal was made to the great council of state, in which the prisoners were known to have a great number of friends, sufficient, perhaps, to obtain their acquittal ; besides that, the first constituting of that body had given admission to very many now suspected friends of the Medici. The council, therefore, by which the conspi-

rators had been tried, apprehensive of the repeal of their sentence, and solicitous for the public safety that its execution should not be avoided, demanded the formation of another, to decide whether the right of appeal might not in this case be denied. All Florence took part in this dispute; and while it seemed yet questionable whether the friends of the republic would be able to obtain their end in demanding the formation of this new council, the members of that by which the criminals had been condemned, together with the new Gonfalonier, while acknowledging a partial illegality in their proceedings, resolved to execute their sentence without abiding the result of their application. At the hour of midnight the executioner entered the cells of the prisoners, and inflicted the richly merited punishment on the persons of the convicted traitors. Bernardo del Nero had passed his 78th year, but yet retained the vigour of a fresher manhood, with a courage that fitted him for a nobler enterprise than that which now demanded the forfeit of his life.

The failure of the efforts which had been made in behalf of these unhappy men exasperated their friends and concentrated their party. All the force of their collected hatred was first turned against Savonarola, not more for the resolution that they denominated obstinacy with which he had resisted all entreaty for the accused, than for the influence which he exercised upon the minds of the citizens, and the importance of that influence to keep together the discordant materials which constituted the popular party. The proudest individuals of the city, who, under the sovereignty of the Medici, had long considered themselves as in all respects a nobility, could not be expected to forget that they had stood on bended knees before the unyielding monk, and that his virtue or his pride had made them bend in vain. Unfortunately the character of the prelate who then filled the chair which represented him to the Christian world as the successor of St. Peter,

was such as to make him obnoxious to the indiscriminate censure of the unsparing moralist. The consequence was necessarily a deadly hatred on the part of Alexander for the person of Savonarola. The political enemies of the reformer were not slow to discover, in this circumstance, a powerful engine to be used to the destruction of the unguarded enthusiast. This was to be done most obviously by connecting the interests of Florence with those of the pope; and, on the other hand, by fomenting the quarrel between the head of the church and his refractory subaltern. Florence had long resisted all application and entreaty to enter the league of the Italian states against the pretensions of the king of France. At the same time she was most solicitous for the reduction of Pisa, whose successful rebellion had been no less hurtful to her interests than galling to her pride. The machinations of the Bigi most probably brought about at last a communication with the pope, the object of which was confessedly to include the Florentines in the league of the Italian people, and to secure to them, on the other hand, by the influence of the pope, the restoration and submission of the revolted city. This end it was afterwards found impossible to accomplish; but the hopes of the populace, excited in regard to the re-acquisition of Pisa, were certain instruments in the hands of Savonarola's enemies. It only then remained to make him an object of papal displeasure, and, as such, to render him in the eyes of the citizens an obstacle to the accomplishment of their desires for the recovery of Pisa and the pacification of the state. "Multitudes of complaints against him had been carried to Rome, where he was accused of preaching, in a scandalous manner, against the bad discipline and vices of the clergy and court of Rome. He was further charged with unsound doctrine, and with fomenting divisions. For these misdemeanours he had been several times summoned to Rome by the pope, but had continued refractory to his

orders, alledging divers excuses for his disobedience ; for which he was publicly excommunicated. Under so severe a censure, he refrained for some months from preaching ; and probably would have been absolved, had he continued in the same submission : for the pope himself despised him, and exercised his spiritual arms more at the solicitations of some friars, who hated Savonarola, than from his own inclination. But Savonarola finding that by his silence his interest declined, and the ends for which he had preached could not be answered ; despising the pontifical orders, returned again to his office ; asserting that the censures pronounced against him were null, as contrary to the divine will and public welfare ; and at the same time inveighing bitterly against the pope, and the court of Rome. This occasioned frequent tumults : for his enemies, who got ground every day, stirred up the populace, who, above all things, abhorred disobedience to the pope ; and had him reprimanded by some in the government for his audaciousness, which tended to alienate the pope's affections from the Florentines, at a juncture when he was treating with the allies for the restitution of Pisa. On the other hand, his followers alleged in his defence, that divine service was privileged from disturbances ; that it was dangerous to admit of an example, which would be a precedent for popes to intrude in the affairs of their government. These contentions lasted several days, till Alexander in great wrath thundering out new briefs, and threatening to interdict the city, the magistrates ordered him to desist from preaching. Savonarola obeyed ; but the Dominican friars of his convent went from church to church, preaching the same doctrines ; which were refuted by the religious of other orders. These disputes were carried on with great heat, and excited such animosities both in church and state, that at last a Dominican and a Franciscan agreed to try by fire the merits of their cause, in the presence of the whole city ;

which would convince the world whether Savonarola was a true prophet or an impostor. On the day appointed, the two friars, accompanied by all those of their convents, appeared in the great square before the palace ; where were assembled not only the inhabitants of Florence, but also multitudes that came out of the country. Every thing was ready, when the Franciscans were informed, that Savonarola had ordered his friar to enter the fire with the sacrament in his hand ; at which they took exception : alledging, that if the host was burnt, it would endanger the authority of the Christian faith, by affecting the minds of the weak and ignorant people. But Savonarola, who was present, insisting that the experiment should be performed in that manner, the trial was set aside. Savonarola's credit suffered greatly on this occasion ; so much, that the next day, on a casual tumult, the people took up arms ; and being countenanced by the supreme magistracy, they forced themselves into the monastery of St. Marco, seized on Savonarola, and two other friars, and carried them to the public prison. During this confusion, the relations of those citizens, who the year before had been beheaded, assassinated Francesco Valori, a nobleman of great authority, for being chief patron of Savonarola, and the principal cause that the appeal of their relations to the people on that occasion had not been admitted.

"Savonarola was afterwards put to the question, but in a gentle manner ; and his examination and confession were by the magistracy formed into a process, and ordered to be published. In this paper he was cleared of several calumnies that had been laid to his charge ; such as leading a dissolute life, being avaricious, and having kept secret correspondence with foreign princes. He confessed that those events he had foretold were not by divine revelation, but founded on the doctrine of the Holy Scripture, which he had profoundly studied : that what he had preached, had not

proceeded from any malignity, nor from any ambitious views of ecclesiastical preferments, but from zeal, and in hopes, that through his means, a general council might be assembled, in which the corrupt manners of the clergy might be reformed, and the doctrine of the church restored, so as to resemble, as near as possible, the primitive times. After this the general of the Dominicans, and bishop Romolino, afterwards cardinal Surrente, who had been sent from Rome on purpose to assist at this trial, degraded Savonarola, and the two friars of his order, with the ceremonies used by the Roman church on such occasions, and delivered them over to the secular power. They were first hanged, and then their bodies were burnt, in the presence of as great a multitude, as had assembled before in the same place, in expectation of assisting at the miraculous experiment of fire.* The faults of Savonarola, magnified by his enemies, consist at last, with whatever terms of disapprobation they may express them, in the ultra-democracy with which he endeavoured to re-establish the early institutions of his adopted country, and refused to bow the knee, or otherwise in word or sigh, consent to bend before the pride of an effete aristocracy. His errors, acknowledged by his friends, consist in the enthusiasm which, proposing a noble and important object, disdained to stoop to the means of accomplishing it; and in the extravagant faith with which he seemed to expect the manifest interposition of Providence, as a consequence of the purity and holiness of his motives and of the end proposed to his labours. His virtues are to be gathered from the history of his life and death.

That day, of which the giddy Florentines could not foresee the fatal consequences, and which consigned the zealous advocate of their immunities into the hands of his enemies, who were no less enemies to them, was signalized by another event, in its singular

* Guicciardini.

coincidence calculated to give new importance to his name ; to make it even after his death a rallying point for his friends, and a scorn and reproach among his enemies. On the very day of Savonarola's arrest the king of France was taken by death from the theatre of his triumphs, and the fields which he was even at that moment designing as the scene of new enterprises and anticipated glories. The Dominicans declared that the prophecy of Savonarola, denouncing the vengeance of heaven upon that monarch's breach of faith, was verified in his death ; while the enemies of that order cited it as a triumphant refutation of his claim to the title of a prophet, inasmuch as he had foretold that this conqueror should return to desolate with blood the hills and plains of Italy. Another prophecy of this enthusiast, founded much more probably upon observation and hope than on divine inspiration, was early to be verified in the reformation soon about to burst forth, the founder of all the protestant churches which now enjoy the blessings of religious liberty ; and Savonarola, in proportion as we deny him the glory of the prophet, is entitled to the less ambiguous praise of inferring the necessity of that great politico-ecclesiastical revolution from the abuses and crimes of the Romish hierarchy.* After the death of Savonarola, his party was for a moment reduced to silence ; but soon discovering themselves to be yet by far the majority of the citizens, they resumed all the power which they had exercised under their former leader.

In the meantime while new revolutions were occurring in the South, the death of Charles was productive

* The following were the prophecies or denunciations of Savonarola, insisted upon with the greatest urgency in the vehemence of his enthusiasm :

“ *Ecclesia Dei indiget reformatione, et renovatione.
Ecclesia Dei flagellabitur, et post flagella reformabitur.
Infideles ad Christum, et fidem ejus convertentur.
Florentia flagellabitur, et post flagella renovabitur,
Et prosperabit.*”—

of less important consequences to Italy than had been anticipated. All the claims which, as king of France, he might advance to the kingdom of Naples, were transmitted to his kinsman and successor, the no less ambitious duke of Orleans. To these claims of the king of France, the duke of Orleans thus united in one person the Orleannois pretensions to the duchy of Milan, now boldly asserted in his despatches and emblazoned on his arms. Yet with this pressing danger Italy would not unite in defence of her states. The Lombard tyrant and the aristocracy of Venice still, in the crooked policy of their dishonest designs, considered it expedient to keep up the flame of discord between the Pisans and the Florentines; while these were urged at once by pride and interest to insist on the reduction of the revolted city as a preliminary to any other treaty, and as a *sine qua non* in every negotiation for her participation in the league. On the other hand, the rebels had held out so long; they had been, too, in all their recent encounters so universally successful, as to render the expectation of achieving their absolute independence, out of the general confusion, a not presumptuous hope. But their victories were speedily checked, and their advantages greatly diminished when the Florentines, having taken into their service Paolo Vitelli, entrusted to him the command of their armies. So great, indeed, were the successes of this skilful leader, that the Venetians, no less interested than the Pisans themselves in the protection of Pisa, began to tremble for the safety of that city. To counterbalance the gain which Florence had acquired in obtaining such a leader for her forces, the senate of Venice engaged the personal aid of the duke of Urbino, to whom were given as coadjutors, by advice of Piero de' Medici, Bartolommeo Alviano and Carlo Orsini. Having entered the Florentine dominion on the side of Sogliano, and possessed themselves by force or stratagem of some of the most important posts suffi-

ciently near to the city to excite its fears for the safety of its walls, these leaders compelled the magistrates of Florence to recall their general from the Pisan country as a protection for their own endangered homes.* The return of Vitelli now made the retreat of the Venetians indispensable. But Florence, who had supposed that the duke of Urbino might now be easily made captive, as he was known to be confined by a severe illness in Bibiena, was not satisfied with his retreat from her territory, and considering that his capture could not have been matter of doubt, had her general been true to his trust, she began to doubt that fidelity of which she had received such striking proofs, and to look with suspicion upon the prudent management of Vitelli, of which she had already reaped such unequivocal benefit. On the other hand, the senate of Venice with equal injustice began to suspect the good faith of their leader, the duke of Urbino, and both parties seemed indeed to desire a cessation of hostilities.

In such a condition of affairs it was not difficult to settle the terms of an accord between these jealous enemies. Referring the adjustment of their differences to the duke of Ferrara, they agreed to abide by the conditions which he as umpire should impose; and through his intervention a treaty of peace was established upon nearly equal terms. Venice and Florence were both dissatisfied, yet both accepted the treaty; but the deserted Pisans alone had reason to call them-

* A number of the friends of the Medici had engaged to deliver the important fortress of Bibiena into the hands of the Venetians. "Alviano, who was entrusted with the execution of the plot, despatched some horsemen, accoutred like travellers, who riding all night, arrived by break of day at Bibiena, and seized on a gate of the town without opposition, for the commissary had placed no guard, nor so much as given orders, as in suspicious times he ought, not to open the gates so early as usual. This first party was soon followed by successive detachments of horse, who gave out on the road, that they belonged to Vitelli. Their friends in the town had now no more to do but to declare themselves openly with all security, and thus was the place taken without a blow."—*Guicciardini*.

selves betrayed. Not willing, however, to resign the care of their liberties, defended so bravely against a sanguinary enemy, they still prepared with their own simple resources for the continuance of the contest. Vitelli, on the other hand, now left to proceed without fear of danger or impediment from foreign forces in aid of the city, reduced the neighbouring country with ease, and in a very short period was enabled to begin the formal siege of the rebels in the last hold of their strength. On the 10th of August of the year 1499 he commenced the attack upon the fortress of Stampace, one of the last bulwarks of the unfortunate place. Having carried, perhaps beyond his expectation, this fortress, and occasioned a breach through which it was supposed he might have entered with all his troops, Vitelli did not consider himself prepared for such a step. He caused, therefore, his soldiers, who had already begun to indulge in the license of conquest, and whose ardour he did not partake, to desist in the midst of his success; and it was afterwards discovered that, in the moment in which he was recalling his forces from the pursuit of their victory, and drawing them from the attack of the city, Gambacorti and others of its principal defenders, believing every thing lost, had already commenced their flight upon the other side, and taken the road to Lucca as an asylum from the persecuting fury of the soldiery to which they thus abandoned their unhappy country. The moment of consternation past however away. Perceiving that the Florentines were not aware of the extent of their gain and their power, and that a moment was yet left for hope, and resuming all the ardour of their former resolution, men, women, and children, thronged to the defence. The breach was repaired, and the walls thus manned were held against the slackened efforts of the Florentines, till succour arriving from Lucca placed the city in its former condition, and compelled the besiegers to retire from the fortress which

they had taken with such gallantry, but which it was impossible for them to retain. Thus unexpectedly saved, the city now began to find another powerful ally, which, during the summer months inoperative, commenced with great violence its ravages against the leaguering squadron with the decline of that season. The malaria of the country surrounding the walls of the city, and on which Vitelli was encamped, was already thinning his numbers, and threatened a terrible destruction to his army. That which for many ages had been the scourge of the city, became now its guardian and most efficient protection; and, indeed, in the ages of the Lower Empire, when the art of attacking fortified places was still in a kind of infancy, and rude, requiring the long dwelling of the besieging army before the walls of the beleaguered place, the peculiar dispensation of nature, which surrounded almost all the cities of the seaboard in Italy with pestilential vapour, requiring for a season its abandonment even by those whom long habit had rendered less subject to its influence, and making it to strangers little less than inevitable death, may have seemed a special interposition of Providence for the protection of the citizens against the assaults of foreign rapacity.

Under this influence the forces of the Florentines now became useless for attack; and might even fall, when sickness should much farther have diminished their numbers and unmanned the strong, a prey to the fury of the exasperated rebels. To save them from this possible danger, Vitelli was obliged to raise the siege and retire towards Cascina; to which place, however, the badness of the roads forbade the transportation of the artillery. It was therefore embarked on board such vessels as the Arno in that part might be able to float, and ordered to Leghorn. As if, nevertheless, to counteract all the plans of Vitelli, and to make his own scrupulous caution in the attack upon Stampace the beginning of a series of disasters to end

in his disgrace and death, the transports never reached the sea ; but being too heavily laden or not fitted for the purpose, they suffered shipwreck at the mouth of the Arno, and consequently, yet, within the grasp of the Pisans. Every effort was made by these to obtain possession of so valuable a booty, and succeeding at last in recovering them, they thus were enabled to add to the strength of their fortifications and render them almost impregnable.

Florence was equally exasperated and shocked at this unfortunate and unexpected result of a campaign, undertaken, as it was thought, under the special auspices of heaven ; and while she would not acknowledge the inability of her military, and its incapacity even for such a labour as the suppression of a revolt in one of her dependencies, she was perforce compelled to seek some pretext for her defeat which should save the dignity of her name and the reputation of her armies, to secure the allegiance of other subject cities which might be tempted to throw off the yoke of her command. No subterfuge presented itself ; no alternative between the shame of a public admission of her reverses with the failure of her arms and the sacrifice of the general who had been unfortunate in conducting them. She did not hesitate in her choice ; commissioners were despatched from Florence, who, arriving unexpectedly at the camp of Vitelli in Cascina, were ordered to arrest him and conduct him a prisoner to the city. Under the different and discordant charges of having betrayed his trust for a bribe to the Pisans, or of being in secret treaty with the duke of Milan, or of seconding the views of the duke of Urbino and the Medici, the unhappy commander was put to the torture ; but not all the inflictions of the rack could wring from him a confession injurious to his honour. The voice of the people still, however, considered him guilty, and the public vanity required his death. He was therefore the next day beheaded, to gratify the call of

that imperious passion. No sooner was the sentence executed, than public opinion, which had under the excitement of the times condemned him to suffer, now did justice to his memory and vindicated his innocence and his fame. It had been intended to include Vitellozzo, the brother of Vitelli, in the accusation, if not in the punishment, of that leader, and orders were issued for his appearance before the magistracy. These orders found him confined by illness to his bed, from which he answered that he was in readiness to obey the commands of the republic. Rising at the same time as if to clothe himself for this purpose, he delayed until those of his friends, who, foreseeing his danger, had time to assemble around him; when, springing on a charger which was presented him, and brandishing a weapon with which he was at the same moment supplied, he succeeded in cutting his way through the wonder-stricken crowd which had been ordered and armed to arrest him. In this manner he arrived at Pisa, in which city he was received with acclamations of triumph.

In the meanwhile that these comparatively unimportant affairs were keeping employed the minds of the Venetians, the duke of Milan, the Pisans, and the Florentines, a new and terrible series of disasters was preparing for the unhappy country, of which they may be considered to have occupied the most important divisions. The origin of these disasters, after the first descent of the French upon Italy, was the renewal of the claims of Lewis of France to the ducal crown of Milan in right of his paternal grandmother, and to the throne of Naples as successor of Charles, who, to the disputed right of succession, had superadded the less disputable right of conquest. In the former invasion of Charles no opportunity had really presented itself to the most ambitious prince of Italy to signalize his name by any act of atrocity calculated to justify his private character for vice and crime. This prince was

Alexander VI., than whom, in the long line of papal tyrants, no individual had been found to possess a more unhallowed ambition, while none had ventured in the pursuit of its object to cast aside all aid of opinion, all power derived from the sanctity of the papal name and office ; and while claiming the obedience of his particular subjects, and the respect of foreign people and princes as the head of their ecclesiastical establishments and the interpreter of their religion, to alienate their affection by an open disregard of all the laws to which they bent, and to excite in them a sentiment of hatred too deep to be contemptuous for the frequency and enormity of his private indulgences. This prelate had been the father of two sons ; but one had fallen, and it was scarcely deemed of the slightest importance to clear the reputation of the other from the horrible suspicion of having been the author of his brother's death, for the purpose of concentrating in himself the patronage of his father's office. The survivor of these brothers had been elevated to the cardinalate, and was designated for a long time as the cardinal of Valenza. The ultramontane people have known him better by the name of Cæsar Borgia, a name justly associated in their minds with all of which humanity in its depravity is susceptible of base, monstrous, and infamous. Never did father and son more resemble each other ; and Alexander, satisfied with the power which he himself enjoyed in the papacy, now set no bounds and recognized no respect which interfered with his resolution to fix this idol of his monstrous affections in an ample and heritable dominion. The simple revolutions of the states of Italy offered no prospect of such an establishment, and Alexander with his son directed their eager eyes to the court of Lewis, and trusted that, in the profound convulsion which his invasion of the Peninsula must cause among its people, some opportunity must present itself at last for the building up of their dynasty. The invasion of Lewis found, therefore,

warm and strenuous advocates at Rome. All Italy indeed seemed changed. To the desertion of Alexander from the league, was added that of Venice. The senate of that proud aristocracy had been purchased; the city of the doges, for a miserable share in the spoil, consented to the overthrow of the Italian throne of Lombardy for the substitution of a French viceroyalty. Florence had learned too dearly the cost of Charles' friendship and his enmity; nor could she well decide to which she most had owed the difficulties and the expense that they had imposed on her. On this occasion she claimed the right of pursuing her private wars, and of exemption from all participation in the contest to be waged now another time for the independence of Italy. While yet the fate of this country might be said to be in doubt, the son of Alexander was despatched to the court of Lewis with the bill of divorce applied for by that prince to separate him from his wife, the daughter of Lewis XI., whose want of charms disgusted her lord, when, having himself ascended the throne of France, he no longer owed to her any portion of the splendour of its dignity. The favour of the pope now relieved him from bonds worn with so much impatience, and left him free to connect himself in marriage with the widow of his predecessor, who brought him as a dowry the valuable province of Brittany. For this service Charles created the cardinal nephew, duke of Valenza, whence his common name of duke Valentine, in the Italian histories. Hostilities were now about to commence. The Venetians on one side entered the Milanese, while the irresistible army of the French monarch, led by his best officers, entered the same territory on the side of France. On the approach of this formidable enemy the friends of Ludovico abandoned all hope; and as they had been attached from motives of interest alone to the fortunes of a prince whose restless ambition afforded them continual exercise of their warlike dispositions, and con-

tinual gains from the plunder of friends or enemies, so now even his most trusted adherents deserted his cause, and left an open way for the approach of the hostile armament.

Ludovico discovering every thing to be lost for the moment, and having put the castle of Milan in a condition to withstand the assaults of the French, at least until he should be able, with the aid of the emperor and the hired Swiss, to return with some prospect of a successful resistance, departed with his family and the most valuable of his effects for Germany. Bernadino da Corte, however, was not more faithful than the count of Cajazzo and the other officers to whom Ludovico had confided the defence of his realm. Scarcely, therefore, had he abandoned the walls of his capital, when the commandant, desirous of concluding such a treaty as he might be able to make with the leaders of the French, and having received from them a satisfactory price, delivered his charge, the last hope of his master, into the hands of the enemy. Genoa soon after followed the same fate; and the duke of Milan, one of the most powerful princes of Italy, sovereign of a state that had for upwards of a century and a half disturbed the peace of Italy and threatened it with a master—the prince who had introduced within the Alps a conqueror for the crown of Naples, and by the power of his arms had changed a dynasty in that kingdom; who had afterwards, almost by his word alone, raised up a power to expel the irresistible hordes which he had just before invited into Italy—this prince now found himself a fugitive, and saw his whole dominions, in the space of only twenty days, transferred from himself and his family, and placed under the rod and correction of a foreign conqueror.

On receiving the news of these successes, Lewis prepared to cross into Lombardy, where he was met by the Florentines, anxious, when fortune had given him the victory, to participate in the advantages of his

friendship. It was something of a triumph to reduce the pride of Florence to this necessity; but every thing was for the moment favourable to the desires of Lewis and his allies, in such a degree as to make this triumph of little value in their eyes. Duke Valentine thus began to reap the expected fruit of his labours, reducing under his rule the cities of Romagna, which, paying, before, an ecclesiastical tax to the church, had governed themselves with perfect freedom and independence in their municipal concerns. While these advances to power made the aspiring duke a dangerous enemy, the faithlessness of his character rendered him a no less dangerous friend; and Florence, to secure herself against him in either capacity, had no other means than those which she might derive from the alliance of Lewis. This at last was obtained, and Florence then returned to the prosecution of her designs against the revolted people of Pisa.

Before, however, this renewed hostility could be brought to any result, another change had broken out to alter the posture and complexion of affairs in the North. The departure of Lewis from Italy had instantly been followed by the return of Ludovico; and many cities, of which Milan was among the earliest, opened their gates to receive him. But the treason of this prince in first inviting the arms of France into Italy was not yet atoned for. No sooner had Lewis been informed of this revolution in his Italian affairs, than, assembling a second force, he ordered his general Tramoglia to re-conquer his rebellious provinces—a work of little more difficulty, as it proved on trial, in the execution than in the command. Ludovico was hurled again from the throne of his power; but, less fortunate than he had been before, he fell by treachery into the hands of his rival, and, being conducted a prisoner into France, he there terminated in confinement that life whose course had been a succession of the most important vicissitudes, and which had cost to Italy, be-

sides the years of war that had desolated her fields and wasted her treasure and separated her children, the sacrifice of the last boast which in the wreck of municipal liberty had still been left to them—the boast at least of national independence, and of freedom in the choice of their governors, if not in that of their governments. From this moment the duchy of Milan became the theatre of endless contests between the jarring interests and pretensions of the French, the Spanish, and the Austrians ; and thus the overthrow of the family of the Sforzas, founded by the valour of Attendoli and confirmed by the address of Francesco, now became no less fatal to Italy than to the miserable individuals who thus in the third generation were deprived of a throne that had looked to stretch its wide and powerful wings over all the populations which lay between the unalterable boundaries of Italy. The magnitude of the events with which the name of this Ludovico is connected, and of the important revolutions effected by his agency, have had the effect of giving an air of greatness to his reputation which nothing in his character will justify. Crafty and revengeful, his craft has been mistaken for a nobler attribute, and his thirst of vengeance for strength and energy of purpose. Yet what wisdom or prudence would not have foreseen the danger of the French invasion with the knowledge, or even without a knowledge, of the pretensions of the duke of Orleans ; and what energy of will is manifested in the shifting policy which followed every impulse of varying passion ? Faithless, selfish, passionate, arrogant, a coward and a traitor ; these words express at full, without omission of a single trait, the character of that individual whose lasting infamy is built upon the ruin of Italian independence, and whose punishment, beginning justly with himself, involved and still involves the whole population of Italy for more than ten succeeding generations of her children. Three hundred years since the commission of Ludovico's

crime against her freedom have elapsed, and the fourth commencing century still sees the effect of his treachery in the miseries of Lombardy, groaning under the insult and oppression of 200,000 armed barbarians;—of Venice returning to her waves and her marshes,—of Romagna writhing under the exactions of its spiritual master, sustained in his tyranny by the savage arms of Austria and the treacherous policy of France—of Italy, indeed, from both her seas, impoverished, degraded, and oppressed; ashamed of the glories of her early days, and hopeless for generations of succeeding time, which seems to promise nothing for her regeneration.

To those cities which on the departure of Lewis from Italy had returned to their allegiance to Sforza, the second appearance of the French as conquerors was an overwhelming blow. In proportion to their ability to sustain the exactions of his rapacity, the triumphant conqueror levied contributions in money upon the citizens of those which he pretended to consider as revolted towns. From Milan 300,000 ducats were extorted to defray the expenses of the ambition of its conqueror, and from Pavia one third of the same sum for the same purpose, and under the same insulting pretext.

In the midst of these important events, involving the destiny of the whole Peninsula, Florence continued a silent spectatress, intent alone upon the result of her still-continued exertions against her rebels of Pisa. Lucca, Genoa, and Siena, offered to purchase from Lewis the independence of the cities in rebellion against the Florentines, to be secured in their liberties as a balance of power between the little states in that part of Italy. Many officers of his army added to this tempting offer their entreaties for the protection of the gallant Pisans, with whose sufferings and whose heroic fortitude the whole army of Lewis deeply sympathized. True, however, to his compact with Florence, the king

refused all countenance to the rebels, and yielding to the demand of the Florentines the aid which they claimed in fulfilment of the treaty, he sent to their assistance a reinforcement of 800 lances and 5000 mounted Swiss under the conduct of Beaumont, the only officer of his camp who supported their cause. Relying upon the efficiency of such an aid, the Florentines now looked forward to the no less speedy than inevitable fall of the obstinate city, which had so long baffled their strength and wasted their treasures. The first attack was calculated to confirm the not unreasonable hope. All the impetuosity of the French, directed against bulwarks accustomed only to the formal and but little vigorous attack of the Italians, soon opened a breach for the admission of Beaumont's army, horse and foot. But the city was not yet conquered. Within the walls a deep and impracticable ditch had been excavated by the besieged, and the hurried entrance of the assailants exposed them, in the unexpectedly confined area between the broken walls and the ditch, to an attack on the part of the citizens which might prove fatal even to the bold and disciplined troops of France. From this moment, in which the French commander deemed it most prudent to draw off his forces, the siege began to languish. Beaumont himself was the only individual to whom the success of the attack was really an object of solicitude. To his army and his officers the cause of the Pisans appeared in all respects worthier than that which they had been compelled to espouse; there was a gallantry in their resistance which won the admiration of men, who themselves, in the spirit of gallant adventure, had followed the fortunes of their native prince to the conquest of kingdoms; the best claim to which appeared to them the valour by which they were won. It was therefore impossible to urge the attack with forces so disposed, and so reluctant to obtain the victory. Continual reinforcements were pouring into Pisa, which

Beaumont found it impossible to intercept ; and when at last ambassadors arrived from that city with a tender of submission to Lewis, and a firm declaration of the resolution of the citizens to perish in the defence of their walls against the persecutions of Florence, it became impossible to check the enthusiasm of the army in favour of this patriotic and devoted heroism. Under these circumstances, and apprehensive, perhaps, that the aid which Lewis had intended for the support of the Florentines might be now easily diverted to the opposite party, Beaumont thought it most expedient to comply with the loudly expressed wish of all his army, and return into Lombardy.

This untoward campaign was now to be excused to the king. His arms had been unsuccessful ; and every loss of reputation to them, besides the mortification of his pride, was manifestly detrimental to his most important interests. In the alternative of acknowledging themselves the conquered, or of throwing the censure upon the Florentines, there could be little hesitation on the part of those who were called to render an account to Lewis of the failure of that expedition upon which he had despatched them. It was insisted that Florence had withheld the necessary and promised supplies, without which it was neither expedient nor proper to undertake the reduction of Pisa. The calumniated city hastened to justify herself, and commissioned two of her citizens to appear before the king in her behalf. With Francesco della Casa was associated in this office the more illustrious Niccolo Machiavelli. The arms of France, however, were to be vindicated ; and Lewis, whether persuaded by the representations of his officers, or willing to sustain the reputation of his military at every expense of justice, was deaf to the arguments and eloquence of the Florentine commissioners. Ten thousand crowns were demanded as a fine or an indemnity, and Florence had no alternative but to obey or be forced to obedience.

In the meanwhile a new but not unexpected danger began to threaten the state of Florence on the other side. Having effected the establishment of his rule in Romagna, duke Valentine appeared to have extended the views of his ambition against the territories in allegiance to Florence, if not against the liberty of that city itself. By persuasion of the Venetians he was induced, as a ready step towards the accomplishment of whatever views he might in secret entertain, to adopt the cause of Piero against the republic. Without, however, an open declaration of his intentions upon this point, and at the same time without any avowed hostility of purpose, at the head of an army formidable for the means of resistance possessed by the Florentines, he entered within the boundaries of Tuscany. Passing like an enemy through the open country, he laid waste and ravaged all that did not seem to offer a sufficiently imposing appearance of strength to restrain the wanton ferocity of his disposition ; and having left thus the marks of his devastating progress, but without effecting or appearing to have contemplated any permanent conquest, he retired from Tuscany on the way towards Rome to join the army of Lewis, already in the South, for the occupation of Naples. But though the disguised invasion of duke Valentine had resulted in no permanent change in the affairs of Tuscany, the people of Florence had not been deceived as to its real intention. They knew that any commotion in the city on his approach would have been the signal to the invader for the restoration of the Medici ; and although they perceived at the same time no slight indications among the officers of the government to second such an attempt, they had so ordered the affairs of the city that not the slightest tumult occurred to afford a pretext to the disaffected within or the watchful enemy without, for proposing any change or attempting any forcible modification of the constituted authorities. On the part of France, the restoration of Piero, could it

have been effected in such a manner as to save the faith and honour of her king, would probably not have proved unacceptable. The troops and officers of his army indeed had affected no concealment of repugnance to the Florentines. But Lewis was in acknowledged treaty with them, and Valentine was in the service of Lewis. When, therefore, it appeared that no excuse was offered by the citizens themselves for any interference in their concerns, an order of the French monarch was delivered to the duke, forbidding any demonstration of hostility to the faithful allies of his majesty. Indeed Florence had no cause to complain of this prince who had received her into his alliance. While the band of Valentine's freebooters were spoiling the fields and villages through which they passed, under the safeguard of the permission granted by the Florentine magistracy, the commanding army of the French, flushed with victory in the North, and marching to conquest in the South with all the order of a civil procession, held their way through the territories of Florence which lay in the line of their march.

This passage of the armies of France was in the meanwhile bringing the destinies of the Neapolitan throne of the Aragonese to a crisis. The ambitious pretender who had succeeded to the claims of Charles, was, like that monarch, bold and resolute ; but adding to his boldness and resolution a prudence and a calm reflection unknown to the character of the former invader. Before he departed, therefore, towards the South, he saw the necessity of avoiding the error into which his predecessor had formerly fallen, and made use of every care to secure himself uninterrupted controul of those states which he should leave in his rear. While possessing the friendship of the cities of Italy, he thought it prudent by every means in his power to cut them off the temptation of change, and, purchasing at some expense of treasure the alliance of the German Maximilian, he effectually deprived them of the

only foreign aid to which they could look in case that any jealousy of his success should induce them to revolt from his service. Thus certain of all that he was leaving behind him, Lewis had next to gain new friends in the country whose limits he was about to violate. The king of Spain, by every principle of interest, was bound to the support of his family in possession of the crown of Naples. He had therefore united with it in a formal league, and his troops were already, under the most renowned of his captains, in possession of important posts under the dominion of the Neapolitan king. It was not till the arrival of the French in his dominions that Frederic had an opportunity of discovering the treachery of his kinsman, and the character of the officer who had been chosen to carry it into effect would hardly admit of suspicion. Gonsalvo of Cordova, distinguished as the hero of the Spanish wars of that adventurous and gallant age; extolled as the conqueror of the Moors, and sent by his sovereign into Italy to check the victorious career of the chivalric French, was now to assume another character, and present himself as the executor of the treacherous intrigues of the French and Spanish cabinets. On the abandonment of their cause by their Spanish allies, the Neapolitans resigned all hope of success in resistance, and prepared for a new submission to the arms of the invading prince. Capua, however, refused to follow the example and fortunes of the other cities; it held out with a courage and obstinacy which did honour to its fidelity and valour, but could not save it against the united arms of the Spaniards and French. Its reduction, nevertheless, cost the assailants more labour and a greater loss than their former easy victories had led them to anticipate. When, therefore, it was taken at last, the indiscriminate slaughter of its inhabitants of either sex and of every age, bore witness to the rage with which the allied robbers had experienced even a momentary check in the progress of their depreda-

tions. The convents were not even a sanctuary for those, who, having abandoned the life of this world, had devoted themselves to the nearer worship of the deity and the contemplation of the world to come. The sacred portals of the chaste cloisters were thrown open to the brutal soldiery, which, led by a prince who once had been a dignitary of the church, and even then derived his power from his uncle's office as high-priest of the Christian church, were suffered to drag from the altars the victims of violence, which scarcely merits the name of a human passion.

After this fatal event, despairing of his fortunes and moved at the impending danger of such cities as might still uselessly cling to his party, king Frederic resolved to abandon the contest. He had but the choice of treating with his victorious enemy as a vanquished but a not dishonoured antagonist, or of imploring the protection of the Spanish king, whose breach of faith had reduced him to this unhappy alternative. Having resolved upon trying his fortune rather with his avowed and open adversary than with the friend by whom he had already been cheated to his ruin, he accepted the duchy of Anjou from Lewis as his sovereign, with an annual revenue of 30,000 francs.

Italy now, from the Alps to the Sicilian straits, had changed her state. The foreign king had marched as in conquest through her cities, receiving, in the name of an alliance, their too solicitous submission; and the pope, who now at last had come to obtain a preponderating influence in its secular government, divided the rule of the Peninsula. Florence, even now in the ruin of her institutions and on the verge of a hopeless servitude herself, still woke for a moment from her deep lethargy, and started at the destruction of all that Italy had so long valued in her long struggle, impending in the advancement of the papal supremacy as a temporal power. She knew, moreover, that the unnatural league which for a moment seemed to unite the interests of

France and Rome, must break of itself when the extinction of all their common enemies should leave them to the adjustment of their several portions of the acquired gains. Her policy was obviously to hasten this event by the excitement of early jealousies between these two powers. She therefore artfully renewed her league with Lewis ; and by stipulating to furnish him with large sums of money, which his expensive wars made necessary to his ultimate success, she obtained from him fresh aid for the reduction of the still unconquered rebels of Pisa. While this object of her greatest desire remained yet to be accomplished, she could not behold without uneasiness the efforts of Piero to recover his interest in her government. Many other cities, encouraged by the successful resistance of Pisa, and instigated, no doubt, by the secret enemies of the Florentines, resolved to try the same experiment ; and Florence within a few months perceived herself stripped of all the subject cities that had constituted her strength. Arezzo, Cortona, San Sepolcro, and Anghiari, revolted from her rule, and left her little beyond the country immediately surrounding her walls. It was in this condition that her treaty with France became of manifest avail to her. All the chiefs of the revolted cities, and more especially Vitellozzo of Arezzo, apprehensive of the faithless and unhesitating ambition of Valentine, with one accord submitted themselves for protection to the guardianship of Lewis, by whom they were immediately compelled to return to their former allegiance.

The death of Savonarola, which had been expected to strike a fatal and a final blow to the democratic influence, grown up in Florence again on the flight of Piero de' Medici, had not resulted in any permanent gain to his enemies. The council, instituted in accordance with his views, still continued to direct the affairs of the commonwealth ; nor had the party of the rich been able, after twice returning to the high offices

of Gonfalonier individuals friendly to their views, to succeed in any thing against its authority. A slight attempt, or rather, we should say, a hint thrown out preparatory to an attempt, on the part of Guido Antonio Vespucci, the second of these officers, was met by so furious a demonstration of passionate attachment to the existing order, that nothing had for some time seemed practicable, even to the boldest of those who longed for an opportunity of advancing their private interests, and erecting an individual sovereignty like that of the Medici, disguised, but not restricted by the name of republican laws, on the ruins of the popular immunities. The time was, however, approaching when the pressure of circumstances without began to render the people themselves desirous of a government more consolidated than that which they had given themselves; and which, abundantly competent to manage the domestic affairs of the city, did not seem sufficient to protect it against its foreign enemies in the numerous and important revolutions which were continually changing the aspect of Italian politics. This change occurred in the year 1502; and the election of Pietro Soderini as Gonfalonier for life, to supersede the officers who formerly had exercised for two months at a time the chief executive power, effected, with the consent of the populace itself, a thorough revolution in the government, and struck an irresistible blow against the democratic supremacy. Other modifications were also introduced into the government; and from this fatal year the Florentines had nothing but the good fortune of a happy choice in their supreme executive officers to save them from a tyranny to which they had abandoned themselves.* During all this time the

* "In the new position of Italy, continually menaced by absolute princes, whose deliberations were secret, and who united perfidy with force, the Florentines became sensible that their government could not act with the requisite discretion and secrecy while it continued to be changed every two months. Their allies even complained that no secret could be confided to them, without becoming

war had been slowly proceeding with Pisa ; and one of the first fruits of Soderini's election was expected to be the termination of this struggle by the conquest of the revolted place. Much greater events, however, were occurring in the other parts of the Peninsula to signalize this remarkable period of its history. That which should have been foreseen as the inevitable consequence of the admission of foreign influence in the adjustment of its quarrels, had already begun to manifest itself, even earlier than those who might then be considered the most profound in political calculations had been able to predict. France and Spain, sole arbiters of Italy, had, even before its effectual reduction, discovered a mutual jealousy, which now burst out with a sudden impetuosity into hatred and war. By superior numbers the soldiers of Henry had expected to crush the feeble force opposed to them ; and their impetuous valour comprehended no danger in the cautious and defensive warfare waged against them by Gonsalvo, who once again, having assumed the warrior, was adding, by daily acts of valour and judgment, to the vast reputation with which he had entered upon

known, at the same time, to the whole republic. They accordingly judged it necessary to place at the head of the state a single magistrate, who should be present at every council, and who should be the depositary of every communication requiring secrecy. This chief, who was to retain the name of Gonfalonier, was elected, like the doge of Venice, for life ; he was to be lodged in the palace, and to have a salary of 100 florins a month. The law which created a Gonfalonier for life was voted on the 16th of August, 1502 ; but it was not till the 22d of September following that the grand council chose Pietro Soderini to fill that office. He was a man universally respected ; of mature age, without ambition, without children ; and the republic never had reason to repent its choice. The republic, at the same time, introduced the authority of a single man into the administration, and suppressed it in the tribunals. A law of the 15th of April, 1502, abolished the offices of podesta and of captain of justice, and supplied their places by the *ruota* ; a tribunal composed of five judges, of whom four must agree in passing sentence : each, in his turn, was to be president of the tribunal for six months. This rotation caused the name of *ruota* to be given to the supreme courts of law at Rome and Florence."—*Sismondi*.

his campaigns in Italy. If to the common troops of Lewis there appeared no danger in the handful of men by which the interests of Spain were to be sustained, to their leaders it did not seem necessary to take the Italians themselves into account ; detaching from their interests by continued insult that party which the former treachery of the Spaniards had driven to espouse their cause. A single circumstance, which owed its origin to this imprudent conduct, served, however, to undeceive them, though too late ; and in many subsequent defeats the arms of France might attribute to this overweening confidence their failure and disgrace.

Provoked by the contemptuous treatment which they received at the hands of the French, the Italians now almost universally adopted the quarrel of the opposite party. Yet misled by the ease with which they had been suffered to pass, as in conquest, from the Alps to almost the opposite extremity of Italy, the vain though gallant soldiers of Lewis could not accustom themselves to look upon the children of this degenerate soil with other feelings than those of contempt. It is therefore hardly possible to comprehend the feeling with which, on being summoned to a parly, they heard the challenge of thirteen native Italians in the service of the king of Spain to an equal number chosen from the strongest and the best of the chivalry of France, to determine, if not the question of possession and occupation, yet to settle that at least of superiority in courage and prowess. The challenge was accepted ; and an obstinate contest, in presence of both armies, gave to the Italians a perfect victory. Two only of the French were slain, and ten were marched as prisoners before the triumphant steps of the Italians, undiminished in numbers and proud of vindicating the character of their country and their countrymen. This occurrence, which still betrays a lingering of the romantic spirit belonging to those which have been denominated the heroic ages of nations, was of the utmost importance to

the cause of the enemies of France. The courage of the Italians was revived, and in like proportion the hopes of their adversaries were suffered to languish.

The contests of the rival powers, which from beyond the Alps had now obtained a permanent footing in Italy, were not, however, the most important events by which her destiny was through a thousand fluctuations to be at last finally settled. Alexander, and his son duke Valentine, notwithstanding the success with which their plans had for the most part been crowned since the coming of Lewis into their unhappy country, and in spite of all the plunder which their various conquests had enabled them to collect in the nature of the spoils of war, were constantly reduced by the excesses of their private lives to the most absolute want of the ordinary means not merely of carrying on the affairs of their respective governments, but even of supplying the common demands of their daily necessities. To remedy this deficiency, the commission of private crime, in which the power of their office, though used as a shield for impunity, was not implicated politically, became daily requisite and of daily occurrence. The suspicion which attached itself from this circumstance to all their acts, attends the last scene of Alexander's life; and, even if unjust, revenges the wrongs of humanity sustained at his hands, and satisfies the natural desire which would gladly find something of retributive justice in the death of one who had been in his life a scourge to his fellows. This fortunate event in the history of the Church, and indeed of Italy at large, occurred in the month of August of the year 1503.

Attacked by the same malady as his father, and labouring under the same suspicions, duke Valentine could not have been overtaken by any calamity so fatal to his prosperity, nor at a more unfortunate moment. No sooner had the heads of the principal families of Rome become acquainted with the death of their perfidious enemy, than they rushed to arms with the in-

tention of liberating themselves from what still remained of his hated name and power, in his son. The courage of the duke, however, did not fail him on this occasion ; and his enemies were unable, in the midst of the general execration which accompanied the mention of his name among those who had so recently been subjects of his father's rule, so to direct the public indignation as to deprive him at once of that power and those rights which he had acquired during the life of Alexander. They were therefore pleased to free themselves on any conditions from the dangers of his personal residence among them, and easily suffered him to withdraw from the city, while the conclave, engaged in the choice of a successor to his father, should be in session. The choice of the cardinal Piccolomini, who took the name of Pius III. could hardly be expected to give peace to the church ; his health was manifestly declining at the moment of his election, and his death, which ended the brief exercise of sovereign power to which he had been called, before he had enjoyed its dangerous sweets or borne its cares a month, convened the college of cardinals again for the purpose of naming his successor. The ambitious projects of the cardinal della Rovere now began to develop themselves. He perceived the still remaining influence of duke Valentine ; and sacrificing his long-cherished resentment for the injuries received from the father, now terminated the hostility of years by accepting the papacy from the hands of the son. Assuming on his election the name of Julius II. this prelate introduced a new condition into the affairs of Italy. He listened to the counsels of the Florentines, and placed the venerable authority of the pontificate once more in opposition to that of the Venetian aristocracy. In the meantime the decline of the influence of Valentine, and the successive loss of his dominions, increased the authority of the church by restoring to its head the cities which, having been formerly separated from it by the

act and the consent of the pope, might now have laid claim to a perfect liberty or independence at least. As these defections were adding strength to the authority of Julius, duke Valentine could not but perceive the impossibility of resisting the odium which his long career of crime had excited against his person. Deceived at last himself, he fell into the hands of the Spanish leader, and for the first time learned to estimate, in its application to himself, the system of fraud upon which his own power had been founded and sustained.

These changes in the ecclesiastical states in some measure restored a temporary and precarious peace to all the parts of Italy north of the line which separated the states of the Church from the disputed kingdom of the French and Spanish in the South. A few undistinguished actions still kept up the war between the Pisans and their proud masters of Florence; but Soderini had not yet succeeded in attaining the first end of his election by the reduction of the resolute rebels. In Naples, however, the conflict still continued to rage, and still the conduct of the Spanish leader and the favour of the natives continued to sustain the party of the Aragonese against the superior number and equal boldness of the invading troops. Day after day, however, the cause of the French became less promising. The banished son of Lorenzo de' Medici had entered their ranks, and one important victory obtained by Gonsalvo, secured to Spain the ascendancy in Italy, thus changing at a single blow her relations and her dependence; and freed the Florentines from the most dangerous of the enemies of her liberties. Picro was drowned on the retreat of the French army, in an attempt to cross the river Garigliano. He had not attained the 34th year of his life; yet he had witnessed in his country, and experienced in his own fortunes, all those revolutions which marked the era of the passage from the middle to the modern ages of European history.

When now it became no longer doubtful that the triumph of the Spanish arms could not be arrested by any longer opposition of the French, it seemed expedient to Lewis to conclude the unprofitable contest in which he found himself to have expended the treasures and resources of his proper dominions. A treaty of peace, therefore, concluded with Ferdinand, abandoned to that prince the entire possession of Naples with all its dependencies; resigning all pretension to the crown which it had required the strength of his kingdom, expended during the better part of two entire reigns, to wrest from a monarch in whose family it could never have become a source of possible danger to the interests of France. The two monarchs met in person at Savona, and confirmed, with tokens of personal affection, the treaty which they had made as the heads and leaders of opposing interests. From this meeting Florence had been led to expect the adjustment of her difficulty with Pisa; but the royal umpires, unwilling to settle a question which, while yet in doubt, appeared to hold the Florentines in a kind of dependence, refused to decide in the case. Yet Pisa well comprehended that such a refusal was tantamount to an adoption of her quarrel; and Florence, on the other hand, conceiving it to be an abandonment of the right of arbitrament, prepared to exert that power which she might find in her own strength, for the recovery of the city upon which she looked as her own by every right. Her preparations, however, were suddenly interrupted by order of Lewis, who demanded the payment of a sum of money as the condition upon which he would be willing to suffer Pisa to be attacked. Scarcely had this singular demand been complied with on the part of the Florentines, when envoys from the king of Spain, advancing similar pretensions, demanded for that monarch an equal sum as the price of his neutrality. In the resolution of the citizens to recover possession of the revolted place at every hazard and expense, this

demand, the right of which she had neither the time nor the power to discuss, was also complied with by Florence; and then no barrier remained to keep her from the occupation of the long-desired walls except the valour with which they might be defended. To the effects of this valour it was not contemplated to expose the forces of the republic, which had so often experienced its impetuosity and been compelled to retire before its obstinate and irresistible power. All thought of effecting the forcible reduction of the place was abandoned, and a strict blockade was resorted to as the last means of compelling the submission of those who had proved themselves more than an equal match for the soldiers of Florence in the trial of arms.

Against an enemy thus shut up within their walls the Pisans had no means of defence; the want of provisions soon began to combat among them for the Florentines. After resisting the horrors of famine while a possibility of relief appeared to remain, the wretched inhabitants at last abandoned themselves to despair; and though there were among them many who would have preferred their total extermination to the thought of returning under the rule of their hated masters, yet the greater number, unable to resist the agonies of hunger and sickness, were clamorous for an accord. Florence had no object so much at heart as the recovery of her subject city, on whatever terms that recovery might be effected. Apprehensive of driving the Pisans to desperation, and of some change in her own fortunes while yet the rebels were unsubdued, she was willing to make every sacrifice of feeling in offering terms to the conquered. These terms were accepted. Pisa was to return to her allegiance on condition of perfect impunity to those who had been even most active in her revolution; the city herself was to pay nothing by way of indemnity for the expenses of a fourteen years' war for her reduction; nor even was restitution to be made of that property, which, belonging

to Florence before the revolt, had been confiscated to the use of the revolutionary government. On these conditions the three commissioners of the victorious Florentines were permitted to occupy the city in the name of their government; and thus a second time the want of food, occasioned by the desertion of her allies, had effected the subjugation of Pisa, and obtained for the Florentines that which they could not acquire by the power of their arms and the valour of their citizens. It is remarkable, that of the three commissioners who had conducted this treaty, and who now, on the tenth of June of the year 1509, more than a century after its first acquisition, restored to Florence her former dominion in Pisa, the most prominent individual was a Capponi, descended from that Gino whose ability had formerly reduced the Pisans to the subjection of their rivals, and whose moderation had secured the permanence of the conquest.

The cost of the various expeditions fitted out for the purpose which had thus at last been effected, while it might almost be considered as excessive in the comparison with the advantage acquired, teaches us to estimate not merely the actual situation of Florence in regard to her commercial prosperity, but also as to the importance in which she must have been held by the greater powers of Europe, when we find the monarchs of the three principal European nations conspiring, as it were, to plunder the inexhaustible stores of her treasury. To the king of France the sum of 100,000 florins had been paid under various pretences put forth by that prince, whose real claims to any portion of that amount were his necessities and his power; 50,000 to the king of Spain, with even less apparent right; and 40,000 to the emperor, without even the shadow of a pretext on his part for exacting such a tribute; were the price which Florence was compelled to pay for the mere reputation of her wealth, inasmuch as not one cent of this immense outlay of treasure was directly

used for the conduct of the war against Pisa, which was at the same time to be sustained at no inconsiderable cost, both in the actual form of taxes, and indirectly by the withdrawal of monies, to be so expended, from the use of commerce and industry.

The little war of Florence against Pisa had occupied all the thoughts of her citizens. The time was past in which they had acted as the guardians of Italian liberty, by maintaining in their hands the balance between the several Cisalpine states. No longer having the consciousness, therefore, of the controlling power, she ceased to interest herself in the affairs of those of her neighbours who had not direct connexion with her own immediate policy, and shut herself out from all communication with the governments which the French invasion, and the occurrences succeeding that event, had made of interest and importance to the general welfare of the Peninsula. At the same time the senate and aristocracy of Venice had assumed the high and holy office abandoned by the Florentines; an office so much the more imposing, as the powers with which it brought them in contact were foreign nations, either of which, in the ordinary requisites for a successful war, might be considered a match for Italy, formed into one kingdom and actuated by one will. The following extract from the author of the "History of the Italian Republics," will serve to show the weight of the hostility which her defence of Italian independence excited against her; while it will also manifest the power of a wholesome principle to reinforce the weak and sustain them against the attacks of unprincipled power.

"The period in which the republic of Venice was delivered from the terror of the Turks was also that of the death of Alexander VI., and of the ruin of his son Cæsar Borgia. The opportunity appeared to the Signoria favourable for extending its possessions in Romagna. That province had been long the object of

its ambition. Venice had acquired by treachery, on the 24th of February, 1441, the principality of Ravenna, governed for 166 years by the house of Polenta. In 1463 it had purchased Cervia, with its salt-marshes, from Malatesta IV., one of the princes of Rimini; upon the death of Cæsar Borgia, it took possession of Faenza, the principality of Manfredi; of Rimini, the principality of Malatesta; and of several fortresses. Imola and Forli, governed by the Alidosi and the Ordelaffi, alone remained to be subdued, in order to make Venice mistress of the whole of Romagna. The Venetians offered the pope the same submission, the same annual tribute, for which those petty princes were acknowledged pontifical vicars. But Julius II., who had succeeded Borgia, although violent and irascible, had a strong sense of his duty as a pontiff and as an Italian. He was determined on preserving the states of the church intact for his successors. He rejected all nepotism, all aggrandizement of his family; and would have accused himself of unpardonable weakness, if he suffered others to usurp what he refused to give his family. He haughtily exacted the restitution of all that the Venetians possessed in the states of the church; and as he could not obtain it from them, he consented to receive it from the hands of Lewis and Maximilian, who combined to despoil the republic. He, however, communicated to the Venetians the projects formed against them, and it was not till they appeared resolved to restore him nothing, that he concluded his compact with their enemies.

“The league against Venice, signed at Cambray, on the 10th of December, 1508, by Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian, and the cardinal d’Amboise, prime minister of Louis, was only the completion of the secret treaty of Blois, of the 22d of September, 1504. No offence had been given, to justify this perfidious compact. Maximilian, who detested Louis, had the same year endeavoured to attack him in the

Milanese ; but the Venetians refused him a passage ; and after three months' hostilities, the treaty between the emperor and the republic was renewed, on the 7th of June, 1508. Louis XII., whom the Venetians defended, and Maximilian, with whom they were reconciled, had no other complaint against them than that they had no king, and that their subjects thus excited the envy of those who had. The two monarchs agreed to divide between them all the *terra firma* of the Venetians, to abandon to Ferdinand all their fortresses in Apulia, to the pope the lordships in Romagna, to the houses of Este and Gonzaga the small districts near the Po ; and thus to give all an interest in the destruction of the only state sufficiently strong to maintain the independence of Italy. France was the first to declare war against the republic of Venice, in the month of January, 1509. Hostilities commenced on the 15th of April ; on the 27th of the same month, the pope excommunicated the doge and the republic. The war of the league of Cambray showed the Italians, for the first time, what formidable forces the Transalpine nations could bring against them. Maximilian arrived to besiege Padua in the month of September, 1509. He had in his army Germans, Swiss, French, Spaniards, Savoyards ; troops of the pope, of the marquis of Mantua, and of the duke of Modena ; in all more than 100,000 men, with 100 pieces of cannon."

A doubtful issue to the exterminating war now waged against Venice would have secured the success of the league ; but when an uninterrupted series of victories drove the Venetians from city to city, till at last they had little remaining in Italy beyond the marshes which defended their disheartened city, that saving jealousy, which usually interferes with the ultimate successes of all political combinations, for the accomplishment of temporary purposes, began to exercise its influence in behalf of the unfortunate Venetians. The terrors of pope Julius were first excited at

the rapid and resistless progress of arms, whose prosperity offered him but fleeting advantages, while they secured to the Church a lasting check in the preponderating influence of Spain, France, and Germany, among the states of Italy. He accordingly prepared to withdraw with as little violence as might be practicable from the league; and when it became necessary to assume a more unequivocal ground, removing the interdict which he had but a short time before placed upon Venice, he declared himself ready to espouse her cause, and resolute in the determination to sustain the integrity of the Italian states and the independence of Italy. When once the impetuous prelate had resolved this change of policy, it was impossible for him to enter upon its practice with that prudence which so total and so comparatively sudden an alteration in his views should seem to have required. He now peremptorily called on the Italians to arm in their defence, and indicated the displeasure of the Church as a penalty for adherence to that cause which he had condemned by his desertion. Florence, however, had found her account in her neutrality, and would not now be driven from its protection. Having reduced the city of Pisa, her Gonfalonier was now meditating the recovery of other places, and did not choose to hazard the popularity which had obtained for him his high and responsible dignity, and which the successful result of his recent war of conquest had greatly increased, by the cost of a conflict which might not prove successful, and which could not prove other than expensive, with enemies like the kings of France and Spain and the emperor of Germany, not to mention the duke of Ferrara, and the many cities of Italy which still adhered to the league.

In the midst of the new combinations which now appeared to be forming, the most obvious means of attack upon the pope was not neglected by his enemies. It was remembered how fatal the call of a council had

always proved in later years to the papal authority ; and how, in the days of Ladislaus, it had rendered the head of the Church a dependent and powerless phantom of sovereignty. At this moment the influence of the Church had reached its greatest height by means of its equal and successful alliance with the great powers of Europe, which had on this occasion combined against the comparatively narrow state of Venice. To reduce this influence by ordinary means might prove no easy undertaking even for the proud monarchs whose alliance the pope had deserted. Recourse was therefore had to the extraordinary measure of calling a council, in which the affairs of the Church being taken out of the hands of its prince and guide, should be regulated and reformed according to the general opinion of its necessities, or to the desires of those under whose direction the reforming tribunal was erected.

Florence, had she been as anxious to preserve the spirit of her neutrality as she herself had insisted on the respect with which its form and letter was to be regarded by others, would have rejected the request of the ministers of Lewis, who had desired permission of the Florentines to summon this council in their city of Pisa. But Soderini was greatly under the influence of the French, and the people themselves had long been looking for the adoption of measures calculated to produce a reform in the Church as promised in the predictions of Savonarola. The request for the use of the city of Pisa was granted, and the call went forth for the assembling this congress, which, under the pretext of a spiritual authority, was to decide, so far as it might be found to have power, the fate of the political contest now waging between the Church, as a temporal sovereignty, and the crowns of France, Germany, and Spain. Julius, in the interim between the summoning and assembling of the council of Pisa, was not wanting to the important crisis on which his fate

was hung. He summoned in his own name a similar congress to assemble in Rome, and by authority of which he denounced all those who should venture to attend the sitting of the unauthorized body collected together at Pisa. This activity on the part of the pope confounded the Florentines. The clergy and laity of Pisa had unwillingly suffered the entry of the cardinals who were to compose the council within their walls, and every obstacle was thrown in the way of their organization. The churches were shut against them, and the pious adherents to the high authority of the pope were not afraid to manifest the greatest horror of the rebellious individuals whose opposition seemed in their eyes a sacrilege. Florence had already offended the Church by her permission granted for the formation of this council ; but at the same time she was not pleased at the appearance of the soldiers of Lewis within her territory. These soldiers had been despatched for the protection of the body assembling by her own grant within one of her dependencies, and which indeed, without the security of their protection, might not be able to form itself into an organized body. She threw herself now again upon her violated neutrality, and refused to suffer 300 lances, ordered for the use of the council, to enter her territory. To the fury of Julius was now added the displeasure of the French ; and Florence found that her timidity and want of address had converted all those who would have been her friends, and who had been solicitous for her friendship, into open enemies. Against the arms of France she was however prepared, but the machinations of Rome she could not contend with ; Julius had already succeeded in inspiring with his own fears the king of Spain, who looked with suspicion on the progress of the arms of Lewis ; and the expression of his intention to favour the not yet extinguished views of the Medici to the restoration of their rule in Florence, next succeeded in detaching from the cause of France the pow-

erful influence of that family. The cardinal, who at this moment was considered as its efficient head, was chosen legate of the pontifical forces. In the city, the popularity of Soderini had excited a numerous party against him, while it drove them to the necessity of seeking foreign succour in case of any occasional opportunity for effecting his ruin by a change in the order of the state. The religious party was violent in opposition to his administration, because he had compelled the clergy to bear a portion of the expenses which the wars for the recovery of Pisa and other circumstances had increased beyond the ordinary sources of the revenue to supply. With all these causes of discontent, the difference of opinion in regard to the expediency of opening the gates of Pisa to the revolutionary council, tended greatly to increase the dissatisfaction of one party, and to urge to greater affectation of power the chiefs of the other. By order of Soderini the cathedral church, which had been shut against the contumelious cardinals, was opened, and the Pisans were compelled to receive the council thus forced on them by their masters. Very soon, however, the members, wearied themselves of the continued ill-will manifested by the citizens, and terrified at the dangers to which they imagined themselves exposed, adopted the resolution of removing to Milan, and Tuscany was liberated from this cause of civil dissention. Still Julius did not think it expedient to remove the interdict which he had placed on the city. When, at last, he chose to restore the Florentines to all the rights of which his anger had deprived them, it began to be apparent that his influence had re-produced in Florence all the evils which the early quarrels of Rome and her refractory dependents had caused to her before the establishment of her democracy. While the interdict had remained in force, the greatest loss had been experienced by those of the Florentines alone whom it had not been intended to injure. The cessation of their

functions had deprived the priests of the great sources of their revenues, while the people perceived no very fearful consequences to result from the ban under which they had been placed; nor was it till Julius began to discover the waste of his spiritual arms, and the loss which they caused to his own inferior ministers, that he thought of suspending his anger. In this, however, he effected all that he had failed to do by the promulgation of the interdict. The authority to perform the ordinary offices of the church had been freely granted by the pope; but those into whose hands it had been consigned, abusing their trust, admitted by favour those only whom it might please them to admit to a participation in the imagined advantages of the Seven Sacraments. By the partial distribution of the spiritual offices, thus become favours, a new party was raised up to distract still further the affairs of the government; the rites of the Church were administered through political feeling or for political views; the sick, or the friends of the sick, who sought the consolations of religion, were compelled to purchase them by the promise of support to the ecclesiastical party; and the fury of religious enthusiasm mingled with the warmth of political animosity, and excited the minds of the several parties to a contest for party victory, by the neglect or abandonment even of party principle. Thus it was again that Florence lost sight of the fundamental objects of her government, and suffered every thing to tend with increasing velocity to the restoration of monarchical rule.

While these things were passing in Florence, all the rest of Italy was no less involved in the chances and changes of war. The opposition which Julius had raised to the progress of the French, from being feeble and unfortunate at the outset, began at last to gather strength and assume an attitude of offence. "A powerful Spanish army meanwhile advanced from Naples to the aid of the pope, under the command of Ray-

mond de Cardona ; and laid siege to Bologna on the 26th of January, 1512. The French had driven to despair, by their extortions, the people of the provinces which they had seized from Venice. On the 3d of February, Brescia revolted against them. Gaston de Foix, duc de Nemours, and nephew of Louis XII., had, at the age of twenty-two, been just placed at the head of the French army. With a rapidity ever memorable, he in turn successfully opposed his two enemies. Having, on the 5th of February, entered Bologna, he forced the Spaniards to raise the siege and make a precipitate retreat through Romagna. He instantly returned to attack the Venetians, and on his road defeated one of their armies. He retook Brescia by assault, on the 19th of February, and punished that unhappy city by a frightful massacre of its inhabitants ; but pillage disorganized and corrupted his army, and six weeks elapsed before he could return to Romagna, to oppose the armies of Spain and of the pope, which had again advanced. He forced them to give battle, near Ravenna, on Easter Sunday, the 11th of April, 1512. It was the most murderous battle that Italy had yet seen : nearly 20,000 dead covered the plain on which it was fought. Gaston de Foix was, for the last time, victorious. The formidable Spanish infantry slowly retreated, without permitting itself to be broken in any part. Gaston, furious at its escaping him, made one last effort against it, and was killed.

“The death of Gaston proved the signal of the defeat of the French in Italy. The ministers of Louis thought they might, after the battle of Ravenna, safely dismiss a part of their army ; but Maximilian, betraying all his engagements, abandoned the French to their enemies. Without consenting to make peace with Venice, he gave passage through his territory to 20,000 Swiss, who were to join the Venetian army, in order to attack the French. He, at the same time, recalled all the Germans who had enlisted under the

banner of France. Ferdinand of Aragon and Henry VIII. of England almost simultaneously attacked Louis, who, to defend himself, was obliged to recall his troops from Italy. In the beginning of June, they evacuated the Milanese ; of which the Swiss took possession, in the name of Maximilian Sforza, son of Louis the Moor. On the 29th of the same month, a revolution drove the French out of Genoa ; and the republic and a new doge were again proclaimed. The possessions of France were soon reduced to a few small fortresses in that Italy which the French thought they had subdued. But the Italians did not recover their liberty by the defeat of only one of their oppressors. From the yoke of France, they passed under that of the Swiss, the Spaniards, and the Germans ; and the last they endured always seemed the most galling. To add to their humiliation, the victory of the Holy League enslaved the last and only republic truly free in Italy.*

The French were now fairly driven out of Italy ; and the pope might congratulate himself on the manner in which he had extricated the Peninsula from the dangerous enemy which her domestic quarrels had brought upon her from abroad. He was not, however, satisfied with this true glory, nor even with the power which it had given him for spreading the dominion of the Church over the places which the nepotism of his predecessors had detached from its rule as their rapacity and oppression had alienated them from its influence. Florence was to be punished for her contumacious opposition to his will, or rather Soderini was to be removed from his office ; for Julius fully knew that the obstinate resistance of the Gonfalonier had prevented the city over which he ruled from joining the league against Lewis. A ready instrument was prepared for the hands of the revengeful prelate in the watchful ambition of the Medici.

* Sismondi.

Terrified at the powerful array of her adversaries, the republic despatched ambassadors to the Spanish viceroy, who had succeeded in his master's name to the power of which Lewis and the French had been dispossessed. The viceroy required, as the only terms upon which he would consent to treat, that the Gonfalonier should be deposed; that the Medici should be restored, and with them the form of government which had existed before their banishment. Soderini had been an able and a faithful officer, but he was not made for the times which were now rapidly approaching, and in which the destinies of his country were to be fixed. On this return of his embassy he summoned the council, before which he laid the answer of the viceroy, affirming that he was willing to resign that post, which, at his country's call he had assumed, and for his country's good, when that object should seem more likely to be attained by his abdication. In this assembly it was decreed that the Medici might return to Florence, but that no change should be permitted in the government. It therefore became necessary to put the city in order for defence. Every thing was in her possession to make good her resistance but that most essential requisite at such a time, a firm and courageous resolution on the part of her executive. The viceroy, who was lying before Prato in the greatest want of provisions, was even anxious to be permitted, without disgrace, to abandon the contest. He gladly, therefore, listened to terms from the Florentine magistracy, and for a moderate consideration consented to withdraw his forces from their territories. At this moment, unwilling as they knew themselves to engage in fight, they still hesitated whether to accept the terms, which, without the doubtful result of a hostile engagement, would free them from the presence of their most formidable enemy. In this delay, the viceroy, driven to despair, resolved upon the attack of Prato, which made but a momentary show of resist-

ance to his arms. This show, however, he converted into an engagement sufficient to justify that treatment of the city, which is supposed to be permitted when a hostile army enters a fortress in the heat of a hard contested fight, with all the brutal passions strong upon the soldiery. A license to plunder was given by the legate of the pope, who, as father of a Christian church and Christian people, had undertaken to soothe the excited minds of the turbulent Florentines, and reconcile the opposing cities of a common country one to the other. Five thousand lives were wasted by permission of this sacred authority out of the small population of this inferior city of Tuscany. Nor were they the ordinary passions which generally prevail, and which, by a strange obliquity of moral vision, considered venial, are permitted to the militia of civilized countries; it was not the common feeling of revenge, nor the wanton and savage ferocity which, after the excitement of war, will glut itself in cruelties until the ordinary feelings of humanity return on the exhaustion of the unnatural and animal thirst of blood,—but the calculations of avarice and the eager thirst of gold. The poor were tortured for the wealth which they had not, and the rich for the stores which they were judged to possess. The affrighted females fled to the churches; but even these were not a sanctuary. The soldiers who fought in the name of the high-priest of their religion, stained the very altar with the violated chastity of those who had devoted their lives and their hearts to the service of its deity; and the death which was so freely dealt to their fathers and brothers and husbands, was denied to those alone who would willingly have embraced it as an escape from pollution or a refuge from the infamy of life. Contemporary historians have preserved the memory of incidents which show at least that the Roman spirit was not dead in the hearts of the women of Italy in those days, however it may have departed from the bosoms of their husbands.

The wife of a poor mechanic having fallen into the hands of a soldier or officer, after having been compelled to suffer the last violence, was carried by him into Lombardy. Her singular beauty had made upon him an impression, which the first gratification of desire could not allay, and, clothing her in male attire, he obliged her to follow him; his servant by day, and at times the slave of his passions. Arrived in Lombardy, the officer believing that he had brought his prize into a place of safety, and that the impossibility of her returning through such a distance of country would reconcile her to her condition, began to relax in the watch which he had previously kept upon her manner and actions. Availing herself of this diminished care, when all the camp lay buried in sleep the captive arose, and with a single blow revenged upon her ravisher the wrongs of herself and her husband. The tent and camp around were filled with the spoils of her countrymen; from these, selecting such as she could most easily bear, amounting in money to the sum of 500 florins, she next proceeded to equip one of the fleetest horses in the camp, and long before the morning appeared to reveal the act which she had performed, or to make known her departure, she was far upon her way to return to her country and her husband.

The news of the sack of Prato struck terror into the government at Florence. The people were not ashamed to own their fears, and, citing the fate of that unfortunate city, declared that they would not expose themselves, for the sake of the person of Soderini, to the risk of a similar slaughter. Had there been on the part of the authorities the least resolution, it would have been impossible for the very limited force of the viceroy to cause such a panic in the city, which had just before, with less preparation, withstood the attack of Charles, and contended not unsuccessfully with the strength of his army. But every one discovered the fears of those to whose care the defence of the city was given in

charge ; and there was not one who did not perceive the inefficiency of the measures pursued by the administration in the performance of this duty and for the maintenance of the existing government. The disorder which marked the public councils, and which, in a contest with even the inferior forces of the viceroy, would most probably have rendered vain the defence of the city, became now its safety, but at the same time its disgrace. A band of discontented spirits had long been known to have existed in the city, whose plots to overturn the government and bring about a restoration of the Medici had not been a secret to the Gonfalonier. Under pretence of assembling for the discussion of literary and philosophical questions in the grove of a new academy, these misguided men devised the overthrow of the republic ; and the most illustrious names of the age are found enrolled among those who thus entailed upon their country the curse of a heritable despotism. While it was not yet determined how far the resistance of the city might be either practicable or expedient, a band of these conspirators rushed to the palace and possessed themselves of the person of Soderini. The imbecility of the Gonfalonier at this moment cost him the high office which for ten years he had enjoyed, and involved at the same time the ruin of his country. He was compelled to resign, and to abandon the city over which he had so long presided, and whose fate was now united with his. The hatred of Julius still persecuted him even in exile, till, driven at last from Italy, he found himself compelled to seek an asylum in a city belonging to the Turks.

On the departure of Soderini, the government of which he had been the head was dissolved. The allies, by whom he had been driven from his office, having effected their purpose, now offered terms to the republic. They treated for the return of the Medici as private citizens, and once again extorted from the trea-

sure the wealth which commercial prosperity and ten years of a quiet administration had accumulated in spite of the former exactions of the friends and enemies of the city. One hundred and forty thousand ducats were demanded as the price of those services which had deprived her of a favourite officer, and more than all of the government of her choice.

Twenty citizens having been chosen to re-organize the political body, they restored the original annual office of Gonfalonier, and elected to sustain its dignities Gio. Battista Ridolfi. But the revolution was only to commence with this apparent restoration of the more republican form. Julian, the brother of Piero de' Medici, and Lorenzo, the son of that imbecile tyrant, had entered the city with the troops of the viceroy. For a moment their deportment indicated the modesty of the titles under which they had been permitted to re-enter their country. They soon, however, discovered that the state of the government was not yet permanently settled, and that if they did not lend themselves to its change, they might witness, perhaps, the last hopes of their long ambition crushed by the better fortune or greater daring of some aspirant, whom the aspect of the times might invite to complete the imperfect revolution by the assumption of sovereign power. Julian, therefore, perceived that the blow must now be struck, if the Medici were ever to recover their rule. He urged the calling of the people to parliament for the formation of a Balia; and the actual government, though it could not but understand that its overthrow was aimed at directly in this measure, was too weak to prevent its accomplishment. Forty-eight persons were invested, under the authority of the people, with all the absolute power, which, as thus delegated, might be exercised without restriction in their name. These, being all of the party of the Medici, though anxious for the restoration of power to their house, were yet too crafty by any public and open enactment to recognize

their influence or authority in the new administration. At the same time they invested the Signory with prerogatives and powers never before enjoyed in the city; granting it the right of abrogating existing laws and of creating new, with the privilege of filling its own vacancies, and renewing itself by appointment of its successors. Thus, observes the historian of Tuscany, the Florentine liberty was a second time oppressed by the incapacity and imbecility of its governors; inasmuch as they might, when they beheld the increasing power of the Spanish arms in Italy, have gained the favour of the king of Spain, or raised up a protecting influence against him by purchase of the favour of the emperor, and this at a less expense for the preservation of their liberties than they were actually compelled to sustain with its loss. A slight resistance, indeed, to the first attack of the viceroy, would likewise have saved the city from the disgrace and the ruin into which it now was about to descend, because the king of Spain had already despatched an order to his representative in Italy, forbidding him to attempt any thing in Florence for a change of government, lest the Medici should thereby recover authority and lend themselves, through the influence of the cardinal, to favour the views of the pope, his most influential and powerful rival; and who might, though now his ally, become at the first instigation of his jealous fears an inveterate enemy. All these important changes signalized the latter portion of the year 1512; after which not a parting gleam of liberty illumined the darkness which brooded over the unhappy country, illustrated by so many ages of freedom during two eras of the world's history.

CHAPTER V.

Death of Julius II., and Election of Leo X. to the Papacy.—Lorenzo de' Medici.—Character and Death of Julian de' Medici.—Government of the Cardinal Julius.—Conspiracy against his Life.—Is elected Pope, and takes the Name of Clement VII.—Battle of Pavia.—Sack of Rome.

THIS return of the Medici from their second banishment was not signalized by the cruelty which had marked their former in the time of Cosimo. Nothing, indeed, required measures so violent. The Soderini were not objects of fear, and all the rest of the city appeared even more than willing to return to its chains. The history of the times do give, indeed, an account of a conspiracy which had for its intent the restoration of the republic; but the utmost which we can extract from the evidence of those who flourished at that period, allows us only to infer that yet a few of the Florentines were desirous of vindicating the older institutions of their country; that they had made a list of those whose opinions might be supposed to coincide with their own; and that had this catalogue presented a greater number of more influential names, the desire might have ripened into a plot. Among the accused we meet the name of Macchiavelli; and though there are many who would deny him the glory of sharing in this noble enthusiasm, there is yet sufficient intrinsic evidence in his writings of a spirit that pined after the golden days of his country's honour and glory. This pretended conspiracy was discovered by the accidental dropping of a letter from the pocket of a young man named Boscoli, as he was engaged in conversation with another youth of nearly the same age of the family of the Capponi. No inducement could obtain from these resolute republicans the acknowledgment

of any thing that might tend to criminate those whose names were found in the unfortunate paper. They denied the existence of any conspiracy, while they freely acknowledged the love of liberty which they entertained in their bosoms, and which they cherished and fostered by reverting to the brighter days of their national history, when the republic was the arbitress of political fortune in Italy, and kept at bay the hostility of nations leagued for its oppression. With these sentiments the gallant youths were ordered to execution ; but the government was disappointed of the information which it had hoped to obtain in regard to the extent of the opposition still existing to the return of the Medici to sovereign power. A nobler victim yet remained ; the name of Macchiavelli had appeared upon the fatal list which furnished to the suspicious tyranny a catalogue of its enemies. The name of the illustrious citizen suffered, however, nothing from this trial. It was supposed impossible that a person of such authority should be engaged in a conspiracy against the government without the countenance of others more illustrious, or at least more influential, than the persons implicated in the paper which had furnished the information against himself. The question failed, however, to extort any confession from his lips ; and the stern, enduring, and patient integrity of his conduct in that bitter moment of his life, have afforded a comment on the moral of his writings which the feeble malice of his enemies will not be able to combat or contest. On his liberation Macchiavelli retreated to his country residence, and there revenged his private wrongs and the misfortunes of his country in the production of a satire, from which the veil is only now beginning to be torn, and which has held up to the execration of humanity the name and character of *THE PRINCE*.

The death of Julian, which occurred about this period, wrought another change in the outward features of Italian politics. Their internal character was fixed

before ; and resting now upon revolutions beyond their controul, the states of Italy could only vary in the manner of their servitude ; they had lost the right and power of directing the government of their own concerns.

By a singular combination of circumstances of which no one can have appeared favourable to such a result, the cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was chosen successor to Julius in the papacy. Almost the whole of Italy rejoiced in this election ; but Florence more especially now flattered herself that she had escaped from the dangers and expenses of a contest with the power and influence of Rome. Leo X. was the near relative of her masters, and she was not dissatisfied to receive by such a claim a brief and shameful period of tranquillity. In this long-desired quiet all Italy appeared for a moment to participate in her freedom from foreign oppression. Even the duchy of Milan had returned to her former rule, and, liberated from the arms of France, acknowledged the authority of a Sforza. The feebleness of this prince, no less in body than in mind, afforded a hope to the king of France that there might still be a possibility of recovering possession of Lombardy. A signal defeat, however, experienced by his arms, removed this fear for a short time, and Italy breathed again in the prospect of freedom from foreign intrusion.

The disturbances of Lombardy gave in the meanwhile an opportunity to the pope of reclaiming certain possessions, which he had been compelled to relinquish before to the various claims of the Germans and French. Every addition to the papal strength, of which the Florentines had formerly evinced so reasonable a suspicion and jealousy, now gave to the administration in Florence the most profound satisfaction. The Medici, who saw their inevitable advancement in his gains, were foremost in lending him their interest ; and, aspiring now to a wider dominion than they had

yet enjoyed, they showed in all their deeds a manifest ambition that limited itself by nothing less than sovereign sway. Julian, however, though he certainly was not devoid of this evil of his family, accompanied it by a love of justice, a feeling and an intelligence, which reconciled the people to his rule, and earned for him the fairest fame and the noblest title of his grandfather, while the succession of political power had fallen upon Piero. But this amiable prince was already the prey to a disease, which in the thirty-eighth year of his age brought him to his grave.

This event, a cause indeed of just regret to Florence, was preceded by the invasion of Lombardy by Francis I., the gallant and adventurous successor of Lewis of France. His coming had restored the rule of the French in the North, and Leo X., as well as the Florentines who had temporized while his success was problematical, now sought to be received into his alliance, and forgot that to them had been confided the last hope of preserving the soil of Italy from the pollution of a barbarian invasion. All parties now, as well the native princes of Italy as those whom her wealth and fertility attracted from abroad, appeared to think but of their own advantages in her common disasters. The price of Leo's acquiescence in the conquest of Lombardy and the adjoining cities by the arms of France was arranged; and Florence found her compensation for the same in the countenance afforded by the conqueror to the Medici. Yet still the vanity of this family remained unsatisfied. Lorenzo, the son of Piero, and the inheritor of all his faults of character, longed for the outward trappings of authority incompatible with the sovereignty which he had erected at Florence. The life of Julian had placed some curb upon his grasping desires; but no sooner was that moderator removed, than, throwing off his ill-worn disguise, he laid open claim to the duchy of Urbino, which, by the assistance of Leo, he was speedily

in a condition to reduce to his rule. The taking of the principal fortress called St. Leo was the only difficulty encountered in the reduction of the place.*

The favour of Leo and Francesco had raised the fortunes of the Medici, under this second Lorenzo, beyond even that which they had attained under his magnificent grandfather; and his marriage with Magdalen of Brittany, by which he became connected with the royal family of France, appeared to put the last liberties of Florence in his hands. Returning from Paris with his wife, he could not endure she should witness the air of

* "About San Leo were posted two thousand foot, to keep it blocked up, because it was so very strong by its situation that there were no hopes of reducing it but by famine. The place, however, was three months after taken by a stratagem owing to a carpenter, who one night, by means of a very long ladder, getting upon a precipice or cliff, esteemed the most difficult of that mountain, ordered the ladder to be taken away, and remaining in that place the whole night, as soon as day appeared set about climbing by the help of some iron instruments, till he made his way at last to the top of the mountain, whence descending, and with his instruments rendering easier some of the most difficult places, he returned the next night by the same ladder to the camp. Here giving assurances that the mountain might be climbed, he returned on a night appointed by means of the same ladder to his post, and was followed by one hundred and fifty of the choicest foot; and after they had lodged during the night on the precipice, because it was impossible to climb in the dark, they began at break of day to ascend man after man by those very narrow places, and about thirty of them, with a drum and six colours, were already got to the top of the mountain, where they lay close to the ground expecting their companions who were clambering after them, when, it being now broad day, a watch of the garrison going off from their post espied those who lay prostrate on the ground, and gave the alarm. The men seeing themselves discovered, without waiting for their companions, gave the signal, as they had agreed, to those in the camp, who, according to the orders that had been given, with a multitude of ladders suddenly attacked the mountain in many places to distract the garrison, who running to their appointed posts, and being terrified at the sight of six colours within their fortifications, who were scouring the plain on top, and had already killed some of them, betook themselves to the castle which was built on the mountain. But the others who had by this time climbed up after their companions, opened the gate which gives an entrance upon the mountain, and so gave admission to those who had not as yet climbed. The mountain being thus taken, the garrison of the castle, though it was well provided with all necessities, surrendered the second day."—*Guicciardini*.

equality assumed by the citizens whom he had represented as his subjects. Nor did he deem it necessary to disguise his displeasure. But while his countrymen were beholding with mingled hatred and terror the boldness of his advances, and were anticipating the subversion of the last republican forms which still distinguished their institutions, the hand of death, which had so often preserved the Florentines, was once again stretched forth for their protection. Within seven days of each other Lorenzo and his wife were carried to their graves. But their decease, though it occurred after little more than a year from the solemnization of their nuptials, was not early enough for the world, inasmuch as that brief period had been sufficient to give birth to a daughter, in whom the curse of the Medicean rule, extended beyond the narrow bounds to which it had heretofore been limited, devolved upon the kingdom of France, where it became so much the more pernicious as France had now to exercise a greater influence than Italy, or at least than Tuscany, on the destinies of humanity.

So far had the show of regard for the civil equality been neglected by Lorenzo, that towards the latter period of his life, in imitation of the pomp and pride of sovereignty, he refused all social intercourse with his subjects; and, shutting himself up for the greater part within his own domains, from which he issued his imperious commands, he admitted to his presence few but those who came recommended by the title of court buffoon or by the supple docility of the court satellite.

In the decease of Lorenzo the line from which he had descended became extinct, at least to Florence, and the Medicean title to authority was transferred to the family of that Julian who had fallen in the conspiracy of the Pazzi. Under the ecclesiastic who thus found himself called to exercise the power which long habit had made, as it were, hereditary in his family, Florence enjoyed a quiet and a liberty which she had

not a right to expect. The cardinal Julius appeared indeed but little solicitous of secular honours. He did not interfere to controul the elections for officers of the state in Florence; and, contented to exercise that influence which his name and the fame of his prudence assured him, he soon found himself the sole director of public affairs and the sole regulator of the public policy. Having disposed, as he imagined, the affairs of the city, he seemed anxious to be permitted to leave it, and gladly availed himself of an early opportunity for removing to Rome. His place was occupied by Silvio Passerini, cardinal of Cortona.

Meanwhile the aspect of affairs abroad had greatly changed. The preponderating influence had passed from France; and Charles of Spain and Germany united in his person and crown a claim to fear and reverence, which nothing could excite in the character or conduct of the king of France. Germany, Spain, and the Low Countries, in Europe, with all the inexhaustible treasures of the newly planted colonies of America, had given to the sceptre of Charles a power and dominion unknown to any European potentate since the time of Charlemagne. With him, therefore, Leo resolved to unite in league for the defence of Florence, the protection of the Medici, and the advancement of the holy patrimony. In this league the peasantry of Switzerland also united; and Venice and Ferrara alone remained in the alliance of the French.

The result of this contest was a third expulsion of the French from Lombardy, and the re-annexation of the cities of Parma and Placenza to the Church. Pope Leo, however, had but a brief period of exultation upon this occasion. He had been for some months languishing under an habitual malady, which terminated fatally on the first of December of the year 1521, in the 46th year of his age, and in the midst of the hopes which the victories of his allies had raised to the greatest height. His friends and partizans were too pru-

dent to discuss with over-closeness the question of his death ; and the suspicion which attributes it to poison administered by his attendant Malespina at the instigation of his enemies, remains to this day without any other foundation than conjecture for its support or refutation.

However the talents and merits of Leo may have been over-rated by his advocates, we cannot deny him the credit of having highly contributed to the policy by which Italy was principally governed during his life and rule. Though greatly manifest in his life, this fact was still more obvious in the changes which succeeded on his death. All the minor governments which had been absorbed during his life by the engrossing powers of the Church, and the Spanish or the French, now resumed their ancient state and re-asserted their liberties. In the deaths of Leo and the sons of Piero the line of Lorenzo became extinct ; but the other branch, descending from Cosimo through Julian, still gave to Florence her ruler, and appeared in the singular craftiness of character of its representative to have fastened her bonds with greater strength than they had been riveted by the deceitful munificence of Cosimo, or the bold and skilful daring of his grandson in whom the Medicean rule had become a legitimated reign. To the advancement of the views of the cardinal Julius every thing seemed to conspire. The character of his office, which, joined to the influence of his name, would seem to open to him the most unbounded ecclesiastical dignities, might be thought at the same time to preclude the possibility of his entertaining an ambition of that secular power which his family had attained in the government of Florence. More moderate in his deportment, he impressed his contemporaries with the belief of more moderate desires than those which had urged his ancestors to the subversion of the public liberties ; and the natural aversion to cruelty, which, indeed, was one saving trait in the character-

istics of his house, conciliated on various occasions the love, and at the same time the confidence, of his countrymen.

The sitting of the conclave for the choice of a successor to Leo detached him awhile from the theatre of his aspiring designs ; but perceiving that his absence became the signal for new disturbances, which, though insignificant at first, might naturally be expected to increase until they should produce some important result, he suffered himself to be led with the majority of the cardinals into the election of a prelate who had taken no part in the intrigues or disputes of the college ; and concurred in the election of the cardinal Adrian of Utrecht, who, retaining that name, ascended, by the unsolicited votes of the conclave, the pontifical throne. This important affair being settled, not to the dissatisfaction at least of Julius, he returned to the management of his unsettled dominion in Florence. Unstained by the enormities which tarnish the fame of Augustus in his pursuit of the imperial diadem, the cardinal Julius resembled that illustrious prince in the system adopted by him for the confirmation of his authority. Pope Leo had opened to him an avenue by which with caution to proceed to the utmost attainment of his ambitious desires. The death of Lorenzo and of Julian had rescued Florence, as observed above, from the grasp of the younger line of Cosimo, to which Leo also belonged. Immediately next to the ambition of giving a monarch to Florence from his family, was that of restoring her to liberty ; and when the former was no longer practicable, he sate himself with the greatest earnestness about the accomplishment of the latter. The restoration of a popular government under the auspices of the Church, but to be free from its controul, became the subject of common discourse in the city ; and all who had the reputation of patriotism or learning, were encouraged to present their views in regard to the best model of a republic. A youthful

and enthusiastic poet, whose literary pride would emulate the magnificence of the Medici, had revived in the beautiful gardens of his palace the famed academy; and the *Orti Rucellai* were illustrated by the intercourse of spirits no less exalted than those which have for so long a succession of ages hallowed the sacred shades of Academus; there assembled all that Italy could boast of most illustrious and best; and the groves of this too brief resort of genius and virtue, listened first to the sound of those verses which have spread their author's name over Europe, and heard the words of wisdom and experience poured forth from the treasures of the mind of Macchiavelli in the *Art of War* and the *Discourses on Livy*.

The hopes excited by the intentions of Leo were greatly encouraged by the policy of Julius. Alexander de' Pazzi, belonging to that family in which hatred of the Medicean name could scarcely fail to be hereditary, addressed an oration to the cardinal in the name of the people of Florence, in which the virtue and magnanimity of his patriotism were lauded too much for the conscience of the arch politician. He could not, indeed, be prevailed upon by the author to read it; but referring him to a confidential friend, he promised to receive an abstract of its matter and manner, and to return his opinion to the writer, deduced from his friend's observations. After many days, when Alexander expected to receive the thanks of one whom he had rendered the subject of such exalted eulogy, he was told by the cardinal that the oration itself was very gratifying to his feelings, but not so the matter of which it was made to treat. This answer was sufficient to destroy the too ready hopes which his dissimulation had created; and those whom his pretences had duped now boldly exclaimed against his violated faith. But while many openly complained, there were others who more deeply meditated. Diacceto, a professor of Belles Lettres, Zanobi Buondelmonti, to whom Macchiavelli

had addressed a part of his *Discourses on Livy*, and the famous poet Alamanni with another individual of the same name, were the principal persons known to have engaged in a conspiracy against the life of the cardinal, for the purpose of wresting by force that authority which he had falsely promised to resign. The cardinal Soderini, at whose disposal had been placed a troop of French soldiers under the command of Renzo da Ceri, was connected with this plot, and was to have secured the interest of France in the accomplishment of its purpose.

Florence, however, had long been destined to slavery. All, therefore, that a few of her more resolute sons could do, was but a sacrifice to her perishing freedom; and this, like so many other vain attempts to give back to her hands the empire which she had lost with her high distinction of liberty, served but to increase the strength of those who had erected their dominion on the ruin of the common weal. Discovered by the carelessness of the messenger employed to conduct the intercourse of Diacceto with Soderini, and those of the Florentines who lived with him in banishment, the conspiracy was soon made known to all who were interested in its suppression. Diacceto was arrested and put to the torture, after which, together with one of the Alamannis, he was sentenced to death. The poet of that name, however, forewarned of the failure of their plot, effected his escape; and Buondelmonti also was permitted to pass from the city before the pursuers who were on his track were able to reach him. Followed with the most ferocious resolution by the revengeful satellites of power, in the name of ministers of the law, he owed his safety at last to the poet Ariosto, who then exercised the office of governor in Garfagnana, and had thus an opportunity of testifying that regard for the champions of Italian liberty by his acts which his penury and dependent condition would not allow him to do in his immortal verse. Suspicion

fell again on this occasion upon the author of those works which were supposed to have been chiefly instrumental in exciting the republican spirit to the desire of liberty and the punishment of its betrayer. But nothing appeared to confirm the suspicion, and the revenge of even despotic power could only satisfy itself against this uncompromising enemy by desertion and neglect ; by depriving of his valuable services the country that he loved ; and by exposing to the attacks of want and misery the last days of his clouded life. In the meanwhile the newly chosen pope arrived at the seat of his dominion. The splendour of the reign of Leo had accustomed the Romans to a pomp, at least in the arts and in letters, which they certainly had not known since the era of the first Cæsars. A slight retrogression might not have proved unacceptable to the subjects of a prince, the cost of whose munificence was to be defrayed from their coffers. But to reject at once all that had constituted the glory of their second rule, and made them, in the destitution of physical strength, the admiration and envy of nations ; to destroy, as it were, in the transition of a single moment the boast of successive years, and to deprive them of all that still rendered their city the mistress of arts as she had been of arms—this could not be acceptable to the vain populacc of Rome ; and the barbarous philosophy which Adrian had learned and practised in the schools, could constitute no equivalent in their eyes for his contempt of all that they had been accustomed to value. Their very devotion was blended with the rapture of admiration as they knelt at the altars which the pencil of Raphael had filled with the bright creations of his pure and holy conceptions ; and they turned with contemptuous disgust from the fanaticism which stigmatised the productions of his art as a vain or a criminal idolatry.

Over the mind of this unpopular sovereign the cardinal Soderini began to acquire an influence which

might have proved important upon the fortunes of Italy. But Julius, secure of his influence in the councils of Florence, had too much at stake in those of the ecclesiastical body to which he belonged, to suffer with security the advancement of his personal enemy and political rival. He therefore hastened to Rome, in which city his appearance created immediately a new and a powerful party. Soderini had been willing to earn the favour of Adrian by acquiescence in his opinions. Against an interest so obtained, it required very little shrewdness on the part of the cardinal Julius to obtain a popularity which should prove more than a countervailing support. His name was a guarantee for that insidious munificence which had so long deceived the people of Italy, and all classes rallied around his person as the only hope of their perishing glories. His popularity, intended at first as a check to the favour of Adrian for Soderini, soon combined with other causes to secure that favour to himself. There then remained little for him to desire, as there was little which he could not accomplish. Directing his influence from patriotism or policy to the preservation of Italian independence, he lent all the weight of his name, as the confidential adviser of the pope and as the chief of the Florentine republic, to the formation of a league in opposition to the renewed pretensions of Francis to the duchy of Lombardy. The defection of the constable Bourbon prevented the descent of the French king upon Italy at the head of his troops, more than 30,000 of which, under the command of Bonni-vet, were equipped and put upon their march to bring again on Italy the distractions and the desolation of war. While these evils were preparing for the Peninsula, at Rome and Florence the plague had broken out with more than usual violence; and the general consternation was greatly increased by Adrian's rejection of all the sanitary measures proposed for the purpose of counteracting or limiting its destroying progress.

It is scarcely possible to conceive to what excess of terror and fury the subjects of this weak and obstinate prince might have been driven, had not an unexpected malady supervened, which, in the midst of his unpopularity, seized upon Adrian and hurried him to his grave. So extravagant was the joy of Rome on this occasion, that the physician whose art had failed to save the life of Adrian, was crowned by the people as a public benefactor and the saviour of his country.

Upon the occurrence of this event the cardinal Julius was called upon to assume a higher character than he had yet sustained before the eyes of his countrymen. High hopes had been entertained of his prudence, his moderation, and general ability, if at any time he should be called upon to exercise a greater influence in the affairs of Italy. After two months of discussion in conclave he was chosen as successor to the deceased pontiff, and took upon himself, in the name of Clement VII., the exercise of the highest sovereignty which any of the cities of Italy could confer. Opinions have differed as to the manner in which he corresponded, in his new dignity, to the earlier expectations to which his conduct had given birth. The judgment of Sismondi, however, will hardly admit of dispute; and as the authority of such a name may serve to dissipate in part the idle regard which ignorance or affectation associates with the mention of the Medicean rule, we give his decisive sentence in his own explicit terms. "The death of Adrian, however, saved no one. The cardinal Giulio de' Medici was chosen his successor, on the 18th of November, under the name of Clement VII. This man had passed for an able minister under his cousin Leo X., because prosperity still endured, and the pontifical treasury was not exhausted; but when he had to struggle with a distress which he, however, had not caused, his ignorance in finance and administration, his sordid avarice, his pusillanimity, his imprudence, his sudden and ill-

considered resolutions, his long indecisions, made him alike odious and contemptible. He was not strong enough to resist the tide of adversity. He found himself, without money and without soldiers, engaged in a war without an object: he was incapable of commanding, and nowhere found obedience." From the same source we copy the brief but lucid sketch of the general transactions in which the destinies of the whole Peninsula were concerned, and which put us on the way again to enter upon the more particular notice of the concerns of Florence and the Florentines. "Bonnavet entered Italy by Piedmont; passed the Ticino on the 14th of September, 1523; and marched on Milan. But Prospero Colonna, who had chosen, among the great men of antiquity, Fabius Cunctator for his model, was admirable in the art of stopping an army, of fatiguing it by slight checks, and at last forcing it to retreat without giving battle. Bonnavet, who maintained himself on the borders of Lombardy, was forced, in the month of May following, to open himself a passage to France by Ivrea and mont St. Bernard. The chevalier Bayard was killed while protecting the retreat of Bonnavet, in the rear-guard. The imperialists had been joined, the preceding year, by a deserter of high importance, the constable Bourbon, one of the first princes of the blood in France, who was accompanied by many nobles. Charles V. put him, jointly with Pescara, at the head of his army, and sent him into Provence in the month of July; but after having besieged Marscilles, he was constrained to retreat. Francis I., who had assembled a powerful army, again entered Lombardy, and made himself master of Milan: he next laid siege to Pavia, on the 28th of October. Some time was necessary for the imperialists to reassemble their army, which the campaign of Provence had disorganized. At length it approached Pavia, which had resisted through the whole winter. The king of France was pressed by all his captains to raise

the siege, and to march against the enemy ; but he refused, declaring that it would be a compromise of the royal dignity, and foolishly remained within his lines. He was attacked by Pescara on the 24th of February, 1525 ; and, after a murderous battle, made prisoner."

In Florence, during all this time, very little of a political nature had occurred, or indeed nothing, to manifest her interest and influence in the coming contest. Every thing that transpired within her walls was now limited in its effects, and concerning in nothing the common policy of Italy, regarded merely the advancement of the Medicean authority. In the midst of the rejoicings for the elevation of her favourite, Florence was witness of a tragedy that should have served to show her the ruin into which she was hastening, while yet a possibility remained of withdrawing herself from the danger which yawned before her children. A certain Orlandini had laid a wager with another citizen against the election of the cardinal Julius to the papacy. When the news of that event arrived at Florence, desirous of deferring the payment of his wager, Orlandini declared that it was yet to be established that the pope elect had been legally chosen. How it was possible to convert this trifle into a crime against the majesty of Florence the citizens could not comprehend. They looked, therefore, with all the terror and wonder of awe on the execution of the unexpected sentence of death pronounced by the spiritless magistracy upon this unoffending victim. A violation of justice and an abuse of office like this must have excited the indignation of the people, and driven them to a vindication of the city's dignity thus violated by its magistrates, or it must have sunk them, on the other hand, still lower in the degrading slavery which had arisen upon the ruins of their immunities. The latter was in this instance the consequence. Florence looked with averted eye and palsied heart on the murder of her citizens ; abandoning from that moment her

claim to that allegiance which a nation and government can only demand in return for the protection which it affords to its subjects in their public and private relations. While the vote was taking upon this question, the single act of an individual is recorded as a contrast to the willing degradation of the slaves who now governed for the Medici—the fortunes of the mis-called republic. The right of secret voting gave to each of the magistrates the advantage of throwing himself on that side which the judgment of the people should subsequently approve, even though his ballot had been deposited on the other side of the question.

While all the rest of the council availed themselves of this defensive provision, Antonio Bonsi, who had all along denied the constitutionality of the proceeding, refused to vote in such a manner as to implicate himself by possibility in the charge of this infamous conspiracy against the rights of the citizens. With an open vote he proceeded to deposit his ballot, and formally recorded his vote against the conviction of Orlandini. It was not yet time for Julius to throw off the mask; though he could not have been displeased at such a manifestation of his power in the Florentine government, since he is known to have been extremely solicitous to retain it, even when exalted to a higher dignity than any which he could derive from the sovereignty of the now degraded Florentines. Proceeding, therefore, with the same profound dissimulation which had characterized all his conduct, he loudly approved of the vote which Bonsi had given without avail, and which, had it been of more avail, might have been less pleasing to him, desirous as he was of continuing the Mediccan sway in Florence, although he knew that he could not long be permitted to exercise it in his proper name and person.

All who by strict hereditary right might claim the allegiance of the Florentines had perished. The line of Lorenzo was extinct, and that of Julian ended in

the cardinal, now pope Clement VII. ; and the authority which had been growing in this family from the time of Giovanni, was not of such a character as to justify the distant collateral branches in claiming the rule which had lapsed by the extinction of the lineal descent. Hence the necessity for dissembling on the part of Julius, even in the midst of that despotic power which recent transactions had manifested him to possess over the lives and fortunes of his subject people. The only aspirants, to the succession, in whom Clement appeared to interest himself, were the two illegitimate children of the sons of the last Piero. This was the branch to which it was sought to transfer the usurped authority of the Medici ; and the success which crowned the efforts of Clement put to silence the doubts which might have arisen as to the pretensions of his favourites to the very name in right of which they claimed the government of the city and people of Florence. Hippolito, who had, perhaps, the least disputable claims, was the acknowledged son of the magnificent Julian ; but the favours of his mother had been so liberally bestowed upon other admirers as to render the paternal honours of the magnifico a matter of question. The manner of his entrance into the family of the Medici might seem sufficient in itself to raise a partial objection on the part of the Florentines to a transfer of their sovereignty from the respected house in which it had so long been vested, to the dubious offspring of a spurious and dishonoured bed. A lady of Urbino was the mother of this fortunate child. Apprehensive of the consequence of her incontinence, she entrusted her infant to the care of a servant, and ordered him to place it at the gates of one of those institutions which the frequency of such criminal indulgence in the older countries of Europe have made necessary, and in which so many unfortunates are placed to weep over the barbarity of the unnatural parents, whose caresses they have never been permit-

ted to know. The servant, aware of the intercourse which had subsisted between his mistress and the princely Julian, preferred that mode of disencumbering himself of his confidential charge which should give least burthen to his conscience, and which might by possibility become most conducive to his interests. He carried his charge, therefore, to Julian, and telling him that he had received it as his offspring, delivered it, as he pretended, to the parental charge of its father. The pride of Julian was too much gratified to question very closely the grounds from which his paternal claims had been argued by the mother of his child or by her confidant. He received the infant into his care ; and such an accident converted the destined inmate of a foundling hospital into an heir of all the wealth and all the power of the Medici.

Alexander, the other object of pope Clement's care, had still greater obligations to fortune ; inasmuch as the promiscuous gallantries of his mother, whose venal favours were at the disposal of all the wealthy and the dissolute, made it a matter of still greater doubt to whom the offspring of her criminal indulgences should consider himself indebted for his existence. It was, however, no ignoble boast for a courtesan to have given birth to the heir of Lorenzo de' Medici ; and to him the fruit of her indiscriminate licence was charged by the provident mother. With such a stain upon the birth of his cousins, Clement found it necessary to adopt the most fraudulent arts for the advancement of their interests. He did not venture to propose them as successors to himself in the authority which he had so craftily and yet so despotically exercised ; but he anxiously devised the means of obtaining from the Florentines themselves a request that they should assume the governance of their city. His machinations were therefore commenced from the moment that the ambassadors of the republic arrived to congratulate him on the dignity now a second time within so short

a period conferred upon his family. With the keen apprehension of his profession, the archbishop Minerbetti understood in a moment the tendency of the observations with which the newly created pontiff descanted on the difficulties to which he left his beloved country exposed from the envy of her foreign enemies and the discord of her citizens. The spirit of his order was joined in him to all the pliancy of interested meanness to make him a proper instrument of Clement's designs, and with greater warmth and more apparent earnestness than even Clement himself had anticipated from his ready subserviency, he supplicated his holiness to interfere in behalf of the bereaved and suffering city, to render it something of the security and peace which it had enjoyed under his auspices, by substituting for his government that of some other member of his family. The designs of the pope were not, however, so readily seconded by another member of the legation. Jacopo Salviati was not prepared to sacrifice the little of liberty that remained to his country; he protested against any transfer of her supreme authority by the unauthorized decision of two ecclesiastics; and Clement finding himself thus unexpectedly thwarted by the opposition of those upon whose acquiescence at least he had calculated, was compelled to defer the full execution of his plans till occasion should occur to favour it. He despatched, therefore, the cardinal Passerini to Florence to assume the tutelage of his young relatives, and to watch the political changes which might seem to indicate the proper moment for the accomplishment of his plans.

In the meanwhile Italy was confounded by the issue of the battle of Pavia, and the march of the victorious troops of Charles, who threatened slavery to all its states. Two only alternatives appeared to present themselves in her imminent danger. One only, in fact, offered safety to the Peninsula; but Clement was not equal to the emergency, and that which seemed

to offer least of hazard, though fraught with latent danger, found most favour in his counsels. Instead of uniting the scattered and fragmentary interests which were opposed to the advance of the emperor, and would have formed a power even to make front against the imperial force, he entered into a treaty for the states of the Church and for Florence with the emperor, by which he agreed to suffer the advance of Charles in Italy upon the sole condition of that monarch's protecting the states above-mentioned, with the interests of the Medici; for which, moreover, Florence was to pay to the imperial generals the sum of 100,000 ducats. The army under the conduct of these leaders had for a long time been unpaid, and pillage was the only means by which it had been contemplated to satisfy its demands. A league among the Italians, strong enough but for a short time to resist these savage and mercenary arms, would have had the effect of disbanding them, and leaving the force of Charles in so diminished a condition as to render his escape from Italy in safety problematical. The supply, therefore, furnished by Florence became the principal means of sustaining the cause of Cæsar within the Alps; and the pusillanimity of Clement in authorizing its payment, was justly punished by all the disasters which this invasion brought at last upon his own dominions, the long inviolate city of the Church. The progress of the Germans and Spaniards, after this disgraceful treaty, became still more terrible to the eyes of the Italians. City after city yielded to their arms, and every conquest which they effected was marked by all the licensed ferocity of an assault and storm. The leaders, unable to pay the arrears of their troops, were compelled to look upon the barbarities of their soldiers without attempting to restrain their excesses; and the earliest surrender was not sufficient to disarm the fury of the squadrons which fought for plunder and the incentive of gain.

In the universal consternation Rome herself began to tremble again. She could not rest satisfied with the treaty while she felt herself destitute of the means to enforce its observance against a power whose faith was caprice, and whose right was unlimited power. She now, therefore, allowed herself to be persuaded into a league, which at the first she should have designed and controlled. But the hour of successful resistance was passed, and now she could but afford a pretext to Charles, if any indeed had been wanted, to look upon her at once as an open enemy and a faithless ally; in which two names she made herself doubly obnoxious to his displeasure, and furnished a double pretence for plunder to his savage and mercenary soldiery. The Florentines were compelled against their will to participate in this league; and the controul of its discordant elements was given to the duke of Urbino, while Giovanni de' Medici assumed the actual command. The skill of this leader, though by no means unequal to the occasion, was ill seconded by his troops; the duke of Milan, to whose succour he had been despatched, was unable to await the tardy aid, and the citadel of Milan was compelled to surrender to the generals of Charles.

In Tuscany the affairs of Clement prospered no better than those of his allies in Lombardy. Ten thousand Florentines, despatched by command of the pope to possess themselves of Siena, were beaten by a body of 400, who sallied from the city and seized the whole artillery of the papal force. All Italy was at this time in an agitation more profound than any by which her states had ever been shaken before during the ambitious struggle of the Visconti for sovereign sway in the Peninsula; through all the daring of Ladislaus, or even in the convulsions of Sforza's treachery and the French adventurer's invasion. Nor were the causes of these commotions different from those out of which her former troubles had arisen, nor were the weapons

of defence and offence with which the various combatants within her boundaries were armed, unlike the weapons of the deceitful Visconti or the bold and reckless condottieri of their times. Fraud, force, and accident, conspired now, as then, in her ruin ; but the sound and vigorous constitution which had then withstood the ceaseless shocks of all its enemies, was now succeeded by the failing decrepitude of a declining age. On the side of Lombardy new difficulties engaged the pope, unfortunately master of the fortunes and destinies of Florence, at the very moment when, no longer arbiter of his own, he found himself deserted by his subjects and shut up within the castle of St. Angelo, to the narrow walls of which his empire was restricted, while his revolted subjects and his enemies pillaged the city over which he had ruled, and the temple, which the pride of many years, if not the zeal, had raised for the worship of the deity whose viccgerent he was almost acknowledged to be. The only hope of Clement was now in the moderation or policy of the emperor. He applied to him for admittance into his alliance, and thus destroyed the league which he had formed against him but just before, and which had only now begun at this moment to prosper in its affairs.

The great quarrel of the emperor had not been determined with Francis of France by the long imprisonment of the latter. Italy was to be the lists in which they yet were destined to try the fortunes of their arms ; and the moment of her greatest calamity was at hand. Bourbon, the leader of the forces of the Spanish prince, had cast away all those regards which make the soldier's name a pledge of honour, and nothing but the authority of the crown under which he fought, could rescue him from the opprobrium of a leader of a band of freebooters. Having devastated Lombardy, and made the streets of the populous city of Milan a pasture for the cattle that strayed through its deserted ways, he prepared to sweep with the same remorse-

less fury over the more fruitful plains, and through the still more opulent cities, of the centre and the South. His troop had been just reinforced by hordes of German barbarians, who, in hope of a plentiful and certain booty, and mingling the name of religion, (equally abused by them, and by those against whom they at the same time denounced its just revenge) had passed the Alps for the destruction of Italy. The last hope of this unhappy country was now placed upon Giovanni de' Medici. He had not the means of attacking with any prospect of success the powerful army of the constable Bourbon ; but, harassing him in continual skirmishes, he had for a long time retarded his march, and had succeeded, as it was hoped that he would still succeed, in wearing out the patience of the troops, which began already to be dissatisfied with a country that offered them no longer incentives to plunder, and which longed for the pillage of the richer countries whose boundaries were defended by Giovanni de' Medici. An accidental shot took off this bulwark and hope of the Italians ; he received a wound in the knee which required the amputation of the limb, and being carried to Mantua for surgical treatment, such as the age and occasion afforded, he there expired in the twenty-eighth year of his age, with a reputation scarcely equalled by the greatest captains of his time, and only by that of the Italian Pescara and the unprincipled traitor of France, the constable Bourbon. This Giovanni was the son of another of the same name who had married the widow of the cardinal Riario, the famous Caterina Sforza. He belonged collaterally to the family of Clement, Lorenzo, and Cosimo ; by descent from that Lorenzo whom we have already seen as the son of Giovanni the father of Cosimo, and the founder of the fatal rule of his family. His whole life had been a series of adventures and misadventures. Banished at the age of three years by duke Valentine, he owed his life to the care of his mother. She had clothed

him in female attire, and concealed him in the convent of Aunalea ; but, like the young Thessalian's, when the spirit that panted for battle and arms revealed itself from under the disguise, the warlike character of the youth displayed itself while still he wore the vestments which indicated and required the grace and softness of the gentler sex. Discovering his disposition for arms, Salviati had assumed the care of his education, and Florence for a while was witness of his indomitable courage, till the prudent Sodcrini, mindful, perhaps, of his claims to the supremacy so long enjoyed in the city by his family, had deemed it expedient to avail himself of one of the frequent quarrels in which Giovanni was continually engaged to banish him from the city. His next appearance was at the court of Rome ; and here his active and aspiring character recommended him to employment. In the invasion of the armies of Charles, he was placed, as we have seen, at the head of the forces collected to oppose the progress of the invaders ; and while he lived it had not been possible for them to pass the frontiers which had been given into his charge for protection. Many instances are recorded of his valour and of his sagacity ; and it is not impossible that, had he been permitted a longer life, he might not only have prevented the sack of Rome, but have given also to Florence a nobler line of princes than her fortune and misconduct were destined soon afterwards to bring on her. As instances of his daring it is related, that twice, in all his armour, he undertook for some important purpose to swim across the Po, and, thus equipped, succeeded in stemming the impetuosity of its rapid current ; and that on another occasion, when his troops hung back in terror before the forces of the Spaniards drawn up in order on the opposite side of the Adda, he pushed his charger into the stream in face of either army, and while his own soldiers were slowly transported across the current in boats, arrived uninjured at the other side.

His death, however serious a loss it might appear to the papal service, was scarcely regretted by the pope, whose fears for the success of his scheme in favour of the bastard children of Lorenzo and Julian, were more keenly excited by the bold aspiring character of this more distant sharer of his name and blood, than by the appalling dangers which threatened his countrymen and the people placed under his governance by the advance of the imperial marauders.

From this time there remained no bar in the way of the immediate march of the Germans. At Florence little confidence had been inspired by the conduct of its chief. The vacillating policy of the pope had rendered it manifest to the citizens that his government had not the energy required for their defence; but at the same time a revolutionary movement at such a moment might have cost them even more than submission to his inefficient direction. Among the younger portion, however, of the population a general sentiment prevailed in favour of more vigorous measures; to be pursued at once against the domestic oppression and the threatening forces of the invading enemy. They demanded their instant liberation from the disgraceful thralldom of the government, under which they had fallen, and "constrained the magistrates," as is observed by the great contemporary historian, "to proclaim, by solemn decree, Ippolito and Alessandro, the pope's nephews, rebels, with a design to introduce anew the popular government. But, in the meantime, there entered Florence the duke and the marquis, with many officers, and with the cardinal of Cortona, and Ippolito de' Medici, and they put in arms fifteen hundred foot, who had been kept several days in the city out of suspicion: with these drawn up in order they marched all in a body together towards the square, which being immediately abandoned by the multitude, they took possession of it; but being pelted with stones, and fired at with harquebusses by those

in the townhouse, none durst stay in the open square, but posted themselves in the circumjacent streets."*

It is impossible to decide upon what might have been the result of this contest had it been prolonged, or had it been abandoned for decision to the judgment of arms. Guicciardini, who, in his history is but the narrator of all that he beheld and much that he himself performed, relates, that though he succeeded in restoring harmony to the parties, yet that he was afterwards censured upon either side, as both pretended that his interference alone was that which wrested from their grasp a certain victory. His authority at this moment exercised in the city was derived from the office of lieutenant of the pontifical forces, which he held with the most unlimited controul in the name of the pontiff himself. The importance of this disturbance, so apparently without any certain result, was felt in all the after sufferings of Italy. "Though quieted the same day and without blood," continues the same author, who had unhappily an opportunity of witnessing not only the great transactions of those years, but the secret springs which put them in motion, "this commotion was the origin of very grievous disorders; and perhaps it may be said that, had it not been for this event, the ruin, that very speedily followed, would not have happened. For the duke of Urbino, and the marquis of Saluzzo, on occasion of this tumult, stayed in Florence, and went not to view the camp of Ancisa, according to appointment: and the next day Luigi Pisano, and Marco Foscaro, the Venetian ambassador residing at Florence, observing the inconsistency of the city, protested that they would not consent that the army should pass Florence before the conclusion of the confederacy under debate, in which they demanded a contribution of ten thousand foot, thinking it a favourable opportunity to make this advantage of the necessity of the Florentines. But at

* Guicciardini.

last the treaty was concluded the 28th day, referring the contribution to the decision of the pontiff, who was by this time re-united to the confederates. Besides, the time being come for the payment of the Swiss, and Luigi Pisano, according to the bad provision made by the Venetians, having no money to satisfy them, some days passed before it could be procured, so that the salutary counsel of marching with the army to encamp at Ancisa did not take effect."

While the armies of the emperor were engaged in ravaging the northern states, it had seemed sufficient to Clement to protect the limits of the Tuscan cities by all the arts which his narrow views considered as prudent, and by such force as his failing courage allowed him to unite in their defence. No sooner, however, had the dreaded squadron transgressed the barriers which the feeble policy of the pope had interposed for the protection of Tuscany, than his cares for that district were absorbed in the nearer interests of the immediate possessions of the Church. He would now gladly have seen the havoc in Florence which had depopulated the flourishing city of Milan, but the wants of the army of Bourbon would not admit of this delay, and the general of the league, on whom the hopes of Rome were fixed, had little cause to feel for the sufferings or dangers of Florence. A combination of circumstances had called to this high office that duke of Urbino, whom the ambition of the last Lorenzo de' Medici and the injustice of Leo had expelled from his throne and dominions.

As, therefore, every diligence had not been used, perhaps in consequence of many concurring causes, to keep the enemy from entering Tuscany, it now became difficult to prevent his extending the line of conquests towards the states of the Church, and the alluring conquest of their opulent capital. With the knowledge of the twofold danger that attended the slightest delay, Bourbon pushed therefore on the way

to Rome, the prospect of whose riches about to be submitted to their greedy desires, kept his long unpaid and clamorous followers in a precarious subjection.

The coming of this formidable army was doubly announced to the destined and devoted city. Troops of flying countrymen and the inhabitants of the pillaged towns came horror-stricken, to implore within her walls a shelter from the exterminating fury of the troops who preceded the march of the constable. While the minds of the people were excited to the highest pitch of fearful expectation by the real and exaggerated dangers impending over them, they were summoned to hear the denunciations of vengeance on their devoted city by a singular being, who, with all the madness of enthusiasm and all the earnestness of truth, poured out the curses of heaven on a guilty and long offending race. It was in vain that the authority of the pope was exercised to check the predictions of the prophet of ill. He only cried out the louder against the sins of the times, and named the pope himself as the special object of the divine malediction. Stripes and scourging were of no avail against one, who, in the frenzy of his own ravings, which began to assume in the eyes of the vulgar an appearance of divine revelation, accompanied his denunciations with the most appalling wounds inflicted on himself; and, smiting his bosom with a stone, which drew forth torrents of blood, he in the same moment announced and wept over the desolation of the eternal city. Nor were his predictions vain. The army of the Germans and Spaniards arrived on the 5th of May "before the capital of Christendom. Clement, long alarmed at his march, had, on the 15th of March, signed a truce of eight months with the viceroy of Naples, and dismissed his troops, never imagining that one of the emperor's lieutenants would not respect the engagements of the other. On the approach of Bourbon, however, the walls of Rome were again mounted with the engines of war. The

next day, the 6th of May, this renegade prince led his troops to the assault of the city. He was killed near the Janiculum, while mounting the first scaling-ladder. His fall did not stop the terrific band of robbers which he led: The victorious army scaled the walls, which were ill defended; and spread terror through the quarters of the Borgo, Vatican, and Trastevere. In a few hours they were masters of the whole city, Clement having neglected to destroy the bridges on the Tiber.

"The capital of Christendom was then abandoned to a pillage unparalleled in the most calamitous period—that of the first triumph of barbarism over civilization: neither Alaric the Goth, nor Genseric the Vandal, had treated it with like ferocity. Not only was all that could be seized in every house and every shop carried off, but the peasants of the fiefs of Colonna took possession of the heavy furniture which did not tempt the cupidity of the soldier. From the day on which these barbarians entered the city, all personal protection was withdrawn; women were abandoned to the outrages of the victors; and sanctuaries, enriched by the veneration of Christendom for twelve centuries, were devoted to spoliation. The squares before the churches were strewn with the ornaments of the altar, relics, and other sacred things, which the soldiers threw into the street after having torn off the gold and silver which adorned them. Men, women, and children were seized, whenever their captors could flatter themselves that they had concealed some treasure, or that there was any one sufficiently interested for them to pay their ransom. Every house resounded with the cries and lamentations of wretched persons thus subjected to the torture; and this dreadful state of crime and agony lasted not merely days, but was prolonged for more than nine months: it was not till the 17th of February, 1528, that the prince of Orange, one of the French lords who had accompanied Bourbon in his rebellion, finally withdrew from Rome all of this

army that vice and disease had spared. The Germans, indeed, after the first few days, had sheathed their swords, to plunge into drunkenness and the most brutal debauchery; but the Spaniards, up to the last hour of their stay in Rome, indefatigable in their cold-blooded cruelty, continued to invent fresh torture to extort new ransoms from all who fell into their hands; even the plague, the consequence of so much suffering, moral and physical, which broke out amidst all these horrors, did not make the rapacious Spaniard loose his prey."*

On the taking of the city, or rather, on the approach of the enemy, Clement had betaken himself to his only fastness, the castle of St. Angelo, in which he had hoped to shelter himself till the army of the confederates should arrive for his rescue. The duke of Urbino, however, had it now in his power to revenge upon Rome and the Medici the injuries received at their hands. He delayed, therefore, so long the march of the confederates, that the miserable prisoner, apprehensive of falling into the hands of his enemies without the security of a capitulation, was compelled, for the preservation of his person, to accept the terms which might be offered him; and the price of his safety, to be paid from the coffers of his ruined subjects, drained the people of the little that the sack of their city had left them yet to enjoy. In addition to immense amounts of money extorted in this manner from the humbled pontiff, the exactions of the conquerors demanded the cession for a period of the castle, which had so long proved his asylum and security, of Civita Vecchia, Ostia, Civita Castellana, and that of Parma and Placenza, as a lasting possession. While thus despoiled by his implacable enemy, Clement was treated with but little more generosity by those who had been his friends. The Venetians availed themselves of this reverse in his fortunes to occupy the city

* Sismondi.

of Ravenna, and many other places were torn on this occasion from the rule of the Church. Sigismund Malatesta recovered possession of his old inheritance, the city of Rimini, and the duke of Ferrara seized again the government of Modena. Such were the transactions of the year, whose entrance was announced by the historian Guicciardini as "full of most atrocious, and for several ages unheard of events; as, changes of states, captivity of princes, sackings of cities in a most shocking manner, a great scarcity of provisions, and a raging pestilence spreading itself in a manner over all Italy, where nothing was to be seen but death, flight, and rapine."

CHAPTER VI.

Revolution and Fall of the Medici at Florence.—Nicolo Capponi, Gonfalonier.—State of Parties.—Florence put by Vote under the Protection of the Saviour.—Capponi deposed, and Carducci elected in his Place.—League of Francis and Charles destructive to the Liberties of Florence.—War of Florence for the Defence of her Freedom.—Alexander de' Medici declared Lord of Florence by the Emperor.—Death of Clement VII.

THE progress of the imperialists in Italy produced a powerful effect on the influence of the pope at Florence; "for as soon as the news arrived there of the loss of Rome, the cardinal of Cortona, terrified to find himself abandoned by the citizens, who made profession of being friends of the Medici, having no way to make provision of money but by violent and extraordinary means, resolved to give way to fortune; and, calling an assembly of the citizens, he put them in full and free possession of the administration of the republic, on obtaining certain privileges and exemptions, with leave for the pontiff's nephews to stay in Flo-

rence as private citizens, and a general amnesty for all past offences against the state. These things being settled on the sixteenth of May, the cardinals, with the pontiff's nephews, departed for Lucca, where, soon repenting of the resolution that he had taken with so much timorousness, he tried whether he could retain the citadels of Pisa and Livorno, which were in the hands of governors that were trusty friends to the pontiff, who, however, within a very few days, despairing of relief on account of the pope's captivity, and receiving also a certain sum of money, resigned those fortresses to the Florentines. The city being reduced to a popular government, the Florentines created Gonfalonier of justice for one year, and with a power to be confirmed for three years, Nicolo Capponi, a citizen of great authority, and a lover of liberty.*

Many reasons combined to make the election of Capponi desirable; and, had the same wisdom directed the Florentines in yielding to his measures as that which governed them in the choice of this magistrate, they would have had little cause to regret their election. His principal rival for the office to which he had been elected by the wishes of all the moderate friends of liberty, had been a certain Baldassar Castucci, to whose ferocity of character the name of public liberty and rights afforded a pretext for continual excitement to blood. By the insinuations of this disappointed candidate, a party was raised against the Gonfalonier for that moderation which the precarious state of the times demanded even in the treatment of political opponents; and all the warmth of party was revived both for and against him. The adherents on whom he could most safely rely were those who had adopted the peculiar notions of the old partizans of Savonarola. These notions, now revived, became a means of powerfully acting on the citizens by the in-

* Guicciardini.

termingling of religious fanaticism with political ardour ; and Capponi, who had himself imbibed in a great degree the doctrines of that party, was able to avail himself of them now for the establishment of his still wavering authority. In this condition of the public mind he had recourse to an expedient unequalled for its singularity in the annals of any Christian people, and which is the more wonderful, inasmuch as the doctrines of the Reformation had already greatly illuminated the minds of men, and as the general refinement and intellectual improvement of the Florentines were at this period characteristic of that people, among all the most enlightened of the age. He proposed that the city should be placed under the more immediate care of the Supreme Being ; and, in order that no earthly prince might claim dominion over its population, who had so long maintained the dignity of the republican name, he nominated for election to their highest sovereignty, with the name of King of Florence, "the Saviour of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity." Excited as were the minds of many in the public council, who had been elevated to the Signory by the votes and influence of the revived party of the Dominicans, they were not prepared for so strange a proposal. Capponi insisted, however, on having his nomination submitted to the vote of the house, and the voice of a large majority sustained the proposal. The following inscription was ordered to be placed upon a conspicuous part of the public buildings, as a full investiture of the elected with the sovereignty which had been conferred on him. *THE Christo Regi suo Domino dominantium, Deo summo optimo Max. Liberatori, Mariæque Virginis Regina dicavit. Anno S. MDXXVII.* Notwithstanding this innovation in the name of the government, its actual officers remained the same, and the Gonfalonier still exercised the chief executive power as before. Whatever effect this singular proceeding may have

had, was confined rather to the moral than to the political condition of the citizens. A number of regulations were introduced in accordance with the moral lessons of the gospel, such as it was urged could not but correspond to the will of the Celestial Prince. All gaming was denounced, and the ordinances for the regulation of the manners of the citizens were drawn with strict regard to the obligations of Christian morality. The voice of public opinion was concentrated into law, and that which had formerly been committed to the government and modifying influence of the former, as private habits and opinions, was now submitted to the judgment of the public tribunals for the protection and enforcement of the latter.

Capponi had attained the high dignity which he now enjoyed for the most part by favour of the populace ; but he had known too much of his country's history in her later years, to trust implicitly the favour of a people whose opinions were swayed no longer by an understanding love of liberty, but by the vanity of its name ; and who yielded to caprice the influence and power of principle. He directed, therefore, his care to the conciliating of those higher bodies in the state which had served before to sustain the Medici, since the death of the first Lorenzo ; and all who had been adherents of that family were zealously courted by the Gonfalonier. In proportion, however, as he succeeded in gaining the favour of this party, he detached from his interest the most uncompromising of those by whose influence he had been exalted to office. In this condition of affairs the city saw revived the party distinctions of the period of Savonarola, and the names of *Adirati* and *Arrabbiati* again denoted the passions by which the parties were actuated in their hostility.

At the head of the faction which Capponi had thus injudiciously abandoned, his former rival, Carduccio, placed himself. His character had rendered him an object of dread for a long time to all those who wit-

nessed his pretensions to office, and who had any thing to fear from the supervention of a popular licence for a democratic government. On the other hand, in proportion as he was to these an object of terror, he became each day a greater favourite with his party; to whom, perhaps, his common epithet of Messer Seimittarra, denoting the reckless boldness of his manner, was a recommendation.

As advocates of the popular privileges, or rather, perhaps, as the people themselves, the Dominicans were naturally supporters of the faction opposed to the Gonfalonier; to gain these powerful auxiliaries it was, therefore, that Capponi introduced the remarkable measure related above, and which for a time succeeded in attracting to him the fervent and enthusiastic sympathy of these extravagant partizans. It is worthy of note, that when the voice of the council was taken upon this strange proposition, twenty persons were found to have voted in the negative.

During the time that these events were passing in Florence, that city, as well as all the rest of Italy, was suffering under the severest inflictions of providence in the combined devastations of famine and the plague. From the month of May 40,000 persons are said to have perished before the beginning of the November following. Amid all the desolation caused by such a pestilence, the unhappy Italians had still some consolation under its exterminating ravages. At Rome it had raged with unexampled violence, and the army of the imperialists, by which that city had been so ruthlessly pillaged, now day by day diminished by its fury, began to present to the victims of its lust and avarice a spectacle of suffering that might seem to lighten their own sorrows, and to offer atonement for the injuries sustained at the hands of the imperial generals and their remorseless bands. To the awful ravages of the pestilence, moreover, the Peninsula was in a great measure indebted for the departure of the barbarians,

whose rapacity had rendered her fertility of no avail to her children, and converted the blessing of her luxuriant climate into a curse. "The struggle between the Italians, feebly seconded by the French and the generals of Charles, had been prolonged more than two years after the sack of Rome; but it only added to the desolation of Italy, and destroyed alike in all the Italian provinces the last remains of prosperity. On the 18th of August, 1527, Henry VIII. of England and Francis I. contracted the treaty of Amiens, for the deliverance, as the two sovereigns announced, of the pope. A powerful French army, commanded by Lautrec, entered Italy in the same month, by the province of Alexandria. They surprised Pavia on the 1st of October, and during eight days barbarously pillaged that great city, under pretence of avenging the defeat of their king under its walls. After this success, Lautrec, instead of completing the conquest of Lombardy, directed his march towards the South; renewed the alliance of France with the duke of Ferrara, to whose son was given in marriage a daughter of Louis XII., sister of the queen of France. He secured the friendship of the Florentine republic, which, on the 17th of the preceding May, had taken advantage of the distress and captivity of the pope, to recover its liberty, and to re-establish its government in the same form in which it stood in 1512. The pope, learning that Lautrec had arrived at Orvieto, escaped from the castle of St. Angelo on the 9th of December, and took refuge in the French camp. The Spaniard Alarcon had detained him captive, with thirteen cardinals, during six months, in that fortress; and though the plague had broken out there, he did not relax in his severity. After having received 400,000 ducats for his ransom, instead of releasing him, as he had engaged to do the next day, it is probable that he suffered him to escape, lest his own soldiers should arrest him in order to ex-

tort a second ransom.”* It was not, however, till the year 1529 that a regular treaty of peace between the pope and the enemy from whom he had endured so much, gave quiet to the worn-out subjects of the ecclesiastical sovereignty.† That year had not yet ar-

* Sismondi.

† “Peace was ardently desired on all sides; negotiations were actively carried on; but every potentate sought to deceive his ally, in order to obtain better conditions from his adversary. Margaret of Austria, the sister of the emperor’s father, and Louisa of Savoy, the mother of the king of France, met at Cambray; and in conference, to which no witnesses were admitted, arranged what was called ‘*Le traité des dames*.’ Clement VII. had at the same time a nuncio at Barcelona, who negotiated with the emperor. The latter was impatient to arrange the affairs of Italy, in order to pass into Germany. Not only had Soliman invaded Austria, and, on the 13th of September, arrived under the walls of Vienna, but the reformation of Luther excited in all the north of Germany a continually increasing ferment. On the 20th of June, 1529, Charles signed at Barcelona a treaty of perpetual alliance with the pope: by it he engaged to sacrifice the republic of Florence to the pope’s vengeance, and to place in the service of Clement, in order to accomplish it, all the brigands who had previously devastated Italy. Florence was to be given in sovereignty to the bastard Alexander de’ Medici, who was to marry an illegitimate daughter of Charles V. On the 5th of August following, Louis and Margaret signed the treaty of Cambray, by which France abandoned, without reserve, all its Italian allies to the caprices of Charles; who, on his side, renounced Burgundy, and restored to Francis his two sons, who had been retained as hostages. Charles arrived at Genoa, on board the fleet of Andrea Doria, on the 12th of August. The pope awaited him at Bologna, into which he made his entry on the 5th of November. He summoned thither all the princes of Italy, or their deputies, and treated them with more moderation than might have been expected after the shameful abandonment of them by France. As he knew the health of Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan, to be in a declining state, which promised but few years of life, he granted him the restitution of his duely for the sum of 900,000 ducats, which Sforza was to pay at different terms: they had not all fallen due when that prince died, on the 24th of October, 1535, without issue, and his estates escheated to the emperor. On the 23d of December, 1529, Charles granted peace to the Venetians; who restored him only some places in Apulia, and gave up Ravenna and Cervia to the pope. On the 20th of March, Alphonso d’Este also signed a treaty, by which he referred his differences with the pope to the arbitration of the emperor. Charles did not pronounce on them till the following year. He conferred on Alphonso the possession of Modena, Reggio, and Rubbiera, as fiefs of the Empire; and he made the pope give him the investiture of Ferrara. On the 15th of March, 1530, a diploma of the emperor raised the mar-

rived, at the point which we have reached, and the domestic disturbances of Florence occurred, in the midst of the foreign wars which her sister states of Italy were still waging against the freebooters whom the emperor acknowledged for his soldiers.

It will have been observed that Florence, in all the conflicts arising out of the invasion of the Spaniards and Germans, had acted, when suffered to determine for herself, with a single view to the conservation of her state; and that so far only as that object was concerned, did she willingly participate in the struggles between Francis and Charles. The rapid strides of the latter towards universal dominion in Italy, and the dreadful abuse of his victories, however, threw her naturally by degrees into the arms of France; and a seeming neutrality only prevented the imperialists from directing against her the forces which they still possessed within the Alps. The change of policy which succeeded the liberation of Clement, rendered a league with that power to which she had before inclined inevitable, and made the success of her ally the last anchor of her hope.

If for a period the views of the sovereign pontiff had lain concealed in the discordant interests that had during the time of his rule distracted Italy, he could not at last prevent the jealousy of the Florentines from discovering that his ultimate and dearest object was the restoration of the bastard line of his house to the supre-

quisate of Mantua to a duchy, in favour of Frederick de Gonzaga. The duke of Savoy and the marquis de Montferrat, till then protected by France, arrived at Bologna, to place themselves under the protection of the emperor. The duke of Urbino was recommended to him by the Venetians, and obtained some promises of favour. The republics of Genoa, Sienna, and Lucca, had permission to vegetate under the imperial protection; and Charles, having received from the pope, at Bologna, on the 22d of February and 24th of March, the two crowns of Lombardy and of the Empire, departed in the beginning of April for Germany, in order to escape witnessing the odious service, in which he consented that his troops should be employed against Florence."—*Sismondi*.

macy from which they had been so justly expelled. They perceived that he was now lending himself to the interests of Charles, and that the ability of that ambitious prince's rival to maintain the contest, was their only dependence against the fulfilment of any treaty which might be made for the barter of their liberties between the head of the Church and his so recent adversary. From this moment Florence became the open ally of the French ; and when the treaty of June, 1529, united in the same manner the pope and the emperor, the former was at liberty to prosecute his designs against the freedom of his countrymen, and the latter was heedless of all excuse for the aid which he might be called upon to contribute for the unholy purpose.

In the meanwhile the management of the domestic affairs of the city augured ill for the safety of its citizens in case of danger from without. Party excitement was at its height ; but unfortunately, Capponi, the only one whose motives seem to have been purely disinterested, had from a mistaken moderation embraced the side which was certainly not most favourable to the maintenance of the people's immunities, while those who adopted that more righteous cause, have hardly left behind them the testimonials of an honest zeal in the interest which they so warmly maintained. To these causes, and to the losses of the French in their subsequent campaigns, must be attributed the early loss of all that the democracy of the country had so strenuously urged and sacrificed so much to preserve. Suspicious of the intentions of Capponi, the impatient youth of Florence had formed themselves into a band for the protection, as they averred, of the palace of the Signory, which had always been the great object of attack in all the violent revolutions of the state ; such as they pretended might now be at any moment anticipated from the public enemy, or the more treacherous aristocracy within. Capponi was not

deceived by these declarations. He knew that the eyes of this impetuous band were far more upon him than on the palace ; and that against his authority, if not against his life, their arms would be eagerly raised on any tumult which should be excited in the name of public liberty. To obviate the dangers which surrounded him, the Gonfalonier proposed, as a more efficacious and republican measure, that all the people should be armed ; a measure formerly proposed by his enemies and strongly resisted by him. The former advocates of the general arming now loudly exclaimed that Capponi entertained a treacherous design against the commonwealth in this unexpected proposal, and cried out in opposition to its adoption. The influence of the Gonfalonier, however, carried it in the council ; but the result was very different from that which he had desired, although at first it appeared to be a support and defence to his administration. A certain Jacopo Alamanni, long distinguished for the impetuosity of his character, and violent in his support of all that he believed essential to the advancement of the democratic interest, had obtained the guard of the palace on that day on which the obnoxious measure was to be decided within its walls. In the foolish pride of his triumph, the son of Capponi, on leaving the door of the council before which Alamanni was stationed, had exclaimed in such a manner as to be overheard by the fiery republican, that having carried their point they would now be liberated from the *children by which they had been so long surrounded*. Alamanni knew that the contemptuous words were spoken for him to hear, and with the usual impetuosity of his disposition he answered in such a manner as to cause a quarrel and a sudden resort to arms. In the heat of the disturbance Alamanni drew a poniard, with which he attempted to rush upon one of the friends of the youth who had so imprudently excited the tumult.

Alamanni was, of all the party opposed to Capponi,

the most valued and valuable to the rival of that functionary ; and the fiery disposition which had often before involved him in the most dangerous feuds, and placed him in opposition to the government, rendered him of infinite service in the measures projected by his patron for the subversion of the Gonfalonier's administration. The influence of this party-leader was not, however, sufficient to protect him on this occasion ; nor, though with all the weight of his authority he had advocated the adoption of the mildest punishment for the culprit, yet when the vote was taken on the question of his death, and all the council declared themselves in favour of capital punishment, did the aged disorganizer venture, even under the protection of a secret vote, to deposit his ballot in favour of any mitigation of the severity of the sentence. One only individual was found to have inclined to the side of mercy, and many reasons concurred to make it more than probable that that one was Capponi himself, against whom the enmity of the prisoner had been particularly directed. The head of Alamanni was on the same day offered as a spectacle to the people, who thus were taught to appreciate the energy of the government, its impartiality, and power. In its foreign relations it had not the same discretion. Every action of the pope's was calculated to excite the suspicion of Florence, yet Capponi was unwilling to fear. He trusted rather to the effect and virtue of treaties than to the power of arms ; and while the Florentine youth with incredible alacrity prepared for the defence of the government of their choice, Capponi was treating with the deceitful pontiff who had marked his city for a hopeless and degrading slavery. We have already hinted at the doubts which clouded the births of the two favourites of Clement, in whom the whole influence and all the claims of the Medici were made, by the address of their kinsman and patron, to centre. To what we have already observed we should have added, that there were

many who attributed to a still higher source than the son of Piero, the birth of the illegitimate Alexander, and who did not hesitate to find a deeper reason than that which was made to appear, for the affection and favour of Clement lavished on an individual so dissolute and weak. To these suspicions the complaints of his other favourite contributed in no inconsiderable degree, when, having received a cardinal's hat as a mark of esteem or affection from his protector, he learned that the more fortunate Alexander was to receive the papal support for the sovereignty of Florence.

The state of parties in Florence was at this moment liable to momentous change, in accordance with the developement of the views which Rome was suspected of entertaining against her government; and the elevation of Hippolito to the cardinalate, by strengthening the suspicion of the party opposed to the Medici, effected a great diminution of the influence and popularity of the Gonfalonier. Exhausted by the violent and increasing opposition, he began to look upon the office which had been conferred upon him by his fellow-citizens, as a dignity too dearly purchased, with the loss of that favour which had procured him the election, and with the odium which his unshaken love of justice and his country daily brought on him by misrepresentation of his enemies. At the same time he knew that the safety of the city's liberties depended upon the pursuance of that policy with which he had governed it, and he consented to bear for a while the weight of the oppressive honours of the magistracy, until he discovered that even his continuance in the exercise of its functions would not long be able to sustain the principles which he knew to be essential to the preservation of the popular rule. He then despaired of his country for the first time, and regretted the part which he had borne in the expulsion of the Medici, foreseeing their certain and speedy return to the city with power which had never yet been exer-

cised by any individual within its walls. He would then with pleasure have lain down the ensigns of office, and, hopeless and reckless, have abandoned to their impending fate the misled citizens whom he could no longer serve. The tender which he made to this effect in the council was strenuously opposed by the Signoria, and he was compelled to retain the office in which he felt himself to be of little service to the state, and a mark but for the envy and hatred of his enemies.

In the meanwhile it was resolved by all parties to prepare for the defence of the city. Michael Angelo was selected to prepare the fortifications, and Malatesta Baglioni was put at the head of the troops.

Capponi had now passed through the latter part of the second term for which he had been elected, and although the number of his enemies had greatly increased, it was yet conceded that he would be returned for a third. An accident alone prevented the fulfilment of this general expectation, and in deciding the fate of the Gonfalonier, precipitated the ruin of the commonwealth. A firm and undeviating friend of civil liberty, he had neglected nothing that might seem to secure its maintenance; and for this purpose he had always assumed towards the party of the Medici a demeanour that should take from them all pretext for rebellion, and reduce them to a common will with their fellow-citizens. With the same motive he had endeavoured to conciliate the angry feelings of the pope, and to win him, if possible, from the expectation, if not from the desire, of disturbing the existing order of the Florentine government for the sake of his relatives and wards. Frequent communications are known to have passed between them, and letters were sometimes written which might indeed convey to the populace, who could not enter into the particulars of the Gonfalonier's policy, the possible suspicion of a want of faith. One of these letters fell at last into possession of the opposi-

tion, having been suffered by the Gonfalonier to fall unobserved from his hands. The last election of a Signoria had placed in office two individuals of very different characters, both inimical and dangerous to the administration of which they thus constituted a part. Jacopo Gherardi, the most noisy of all the prominent leaders of the popular party, became an easy and useful instrument in the hands of those who expected to rise in the overthrow of Capponi's administration. He was clamorous, daring, and insolent; but nothing appears against him to blacken his name with any fouler charge. Francesco Valori was, however, a more dangerous enemy, not merely to the person of the Gonfalonier, but to the principles which his whole authority had been bent to sustain. With the most unblushing effrontery he claimed to belong to that party which styled itself the democratic, and which had, as a test and a common bond, the hatred of the Medici, and, by consequence, of the pope. Yet at the very moment in which his party were denouncing the ambition of the crafty, and at the same time violent, prelate, he was engaged with him in a treaty of a private nature, as he averred, but which ought to have rendered him infinitely more an object of suspicion to the jealous Florentines, than the honest and uncompromising Capponi. Into the hands of the former of these the letter from Rome unfortunately fell, and a private council of all who were most earnest in favour of a revolutionary movement was invited to attend, and to suggest such measures as the occasion might seem to present for the ruin of the Gonfalonier.

It was determined in this secret conference to cause, during the night, a number of copies to be distributed among the most violent of the people, and to demand the trial of the Gonfalonier as a secret agent of the pope for the restoration of the Medici. The plot was but too successful. On the morning Capponi found himself besieged in his palace, not only by the secret

enemies of his person, but by the real friends of the country, persuaded that its liberties had been bartered by their magistrate. Nor was it sufficient for them to demand his deposition, but with the most pressing instances they called for his life. With the utmost difficulty his colleagues in the government succeeded in appeasing their anger, by the assurance that the delinquent should be submitted to the form of trial provided by the constitution of their government.

Capponi prepared for the event with a temperate resolution, which disarmed the most zealous of his enemies of the ferocity with which they had panted for his blood. His harangue was manly, and at the same time marked with the modesty of his character. Francesco Carducci had, in the brief interval between his offence and his trial, been elected to fill the chair from which he had been so injuriously expelled. After unfolding the views by which he had been governed, and showing that in these he had been seconded by many of those who still deservedly enjoyed the public confidence, he by degrees began to abandon the argumentative method, which he saw had convinced his hearers and assured his acquittal from their justice if not from their passion; till, warming with indignant pride, and forgetful of the jeopardy in which his life was placed, he abandoned himself to the contemplation of what he had done himself for his country in emulation of three generations of his forefathers. "But whence is it inferred," he exclaimed, "that the charge on which my son was to be despatched to Rome, which seems the gravest of all the accusations against me, was one of evil consequence to the peace and happiness of these walls? Is it from that which is seen upon my face, or in that which has fallen from my lips? Is it then in my actions, because I was the first to vindicate for the citizens those rights which had been usurped by the Medici? Is it from my life of sixty years, which I have lived in such a manner that

no man has been able to charge me with a single wrong? Is it from the death of Piero my father, or from the life of Neri my grandfather, or from the acts of the long line of my ancestors, performed by them for the liberty and advancement of the commonwealth; or from the poverty of all who bear our name? My father, to maintain the liberties of this republic, in the midst of a war of hostile and barbarous nations, tore, in the presence of the king of France, the instrument which proposed the sacrifice of her rights—and he was but a private citizen! And what! shall I, Gonfalonier of Justice, in the midst of my friends, and kindred, and fellow-citizens, shall I make terms to render her a slave? Shall I, who might enjoy a life of liberty to the eternal honour of my name, exchange it for the condition of slavery to its perpetual shame? Wherefore I pray you all, and you especially, my judges and fellow-citizens, that you will well reflect, in deciding upon this my cause, that my accuser is Jacopo Gherardi; and that I, who with all truth defend myself, am Nicolo, the son of Piero Capponi—that in your hands and your votes are not alone my honour and my life, the life and honour of a citizen of Florence, but the honour and safety of this city and of the Florentine people. This, fellow-citizens, is the scope and object of Jacopo Gherardi, and those who use him as their instrument; not so much that they may injure me, as to reduce the commonwealth into a private good—to make of this public, free, popular government, a personal power and license; nor do they see, blinded by envy, and avarice, and ambition, that they themselves pursue in this the certain road to place, with all our common shame and loss, this glorious and illustrious and powerful city, with all its wide and flourishing empire, in the power of the pope; and consequently (which may God forbid) to change its freedom and prosperity to misery and perpetual servitude.”

Before Capponi had made an end of his address, it

became evident that the opinions of his hearers had already acquitted him. Gherardi was quick to perceive the escape of his victim, and, springing to his feet, exclaimed, "If the ballots do not, this shall win the game;" and he brandished his dagger in the presence of the assembly. On the other hand, a partizan of the deposed Gonfalonier, a certain Lorenzo Bernardi, in a similar attitude in front of Gherardi cried out, "and this," as he shook his poniard in the face of his adversary, "this shall unwind it again." The matter, however, was not to be settled by the voice of the council, nor by the influence of either party in the administration. The whole city had armed for one who had given so many proofs of an exalted patriotism and a disinterested love of its interests. Tumultuous crowds demanded the safety of the accused, and possessing themselves of his person, conveyed him in triumph to his home; "so that," says his historian, "he was attended by a greater and more enthusiastically affectionate concourse of his fellow-citizens on his deposition, than even when by their unanimous voice he had gone to clothe himself in the ensigns of their highest magistracy." The next day he was seen in the garb of a private citizen attending to his domestic concerns in the public places of the city; but apprehensive that his presence might yet become a cause of dissention and tumult, he early withdrew from its walls; and with no regret but for the dangers which he beheld impending over his country, he retired to his patrimonial estate without the town, abandoning all thoughts of what he had been in the state, or yet might be, for the quiet enjoyment of private life in the bosom of his family.

The deposition of Capponi convinced the pope that nothing was to be hoped for his favourites from the Florentines. Resolving not, however, to be crossed in his views, he abandoned himself to the alliance with Cæ-

sar, to which we have already alluded ;* contented to secure by such aid the end so long desired, and otherwise so desperate of attainment. For a short time the hopes of the commonwealth were placed upon Francis and France ; but when, after a brief hesitation, that monarch and that country became parties to the treaty which then combined so many enemies, the proud and indignant but still not terrified or humbled republicans, perceived that they were left to maintain single-handed their independence against the powers of Europe, or to yield it up a sacrifice to the unhallowed combination of its ruthless enemies and worthless friends.

“ Florence, during the whole period of its glory and power, had neglected the arts of war : it reckoned for its defence on the adventurers whom its wealth could summon from all parts to its service ; and set but little value on a courage which men, without any other virtue, were so eager to sell to the highest bidder. Since the Transalpine nations had begun to subdue Italy to their tyranny, these hireling arms sufficed no longer for the public safety. Statesmen began to see the necessity of giving the republic a protection within itself. Macchiavelli, who died on the 22d of June, 1527, six weeks after the restoration of the popular government, had been long engaged in persuading his fellow-citizens of the necessity of awakening a military spirit in the people : it was he who caused the country militia, named *l'ordinanza*, to be formed into regiments. A body of mercenaries, organized by Giovanni de' Medici, a distant kinsman of the pope's, served at the time as a military school for the Tuscans, among whom alone the corps had been raised : it acquired a high reputation under the name of *bande nere*. No infantry equalled it in courage and intelligence. Five thousand of these warriors served under Lautrec in the

* See page 222 and note.

kingdom of Naples, where they almost all perished. When, towards the end of the year 1528, the Florentines perceived that their situation became more and more critical, they formed, among those who enjoyed the greatest privileges in their country, two bodies of militia, which displayed the utmost valour for its defence. The first, consisting of 300 young men of noble families, undertook the guard of the palace and the support of the constitution; the second, of 4000 soldiers drawn only from among families having a right to sit in the council-general, were called the civic militia: both soon found opportunities of proving that generosity and patriotism suffice to create, in a very short period, the best soldiers."*

An animation like that which now prevailed in the minds of her citizens with an unanimity of principle and purpose, had long been unknown to the unfortunate republic. Every thing breathed war, and every breast seemed eager for the commencement of its labours. Those cities which, like Arczzo, Pistoja, and Pisa, were supposed hostile to the success of the Florentines, were compelled to give sureties for their fidelity; and those which, like Florence herself, now raised for the last time the standard of Italian liberty, and made with her a common cause against the pretensions of the ambitious priest and mercenary barbarian, were placed under direction of her officers specially charged for their defence. Never before had Tuscany witnessed such a scene of preparation, or been agitated by an array like this of foreign and domestic arms. Her last banner was spread to the wind, and her last sword was girded to the side of her sons; and if she could not vindicate, against the resistless force of numbers and discipline, the liberty of her few resolved and gallant children; if she could not give back to those who had abandoned it and fled from it and betrayed it, the freedom which had mark-

* Sismondi.

ed them in the long ages when Europe's brightest history was their's ; her last field was worthy at least of her early renown, and the sacrifice of her liberties was not unworthy of a people who had lived under the protection of equal laws, and been dignified by the long exercise of equal rights.

It was necessary, in the exterminating war with which Clement now threatened his countrymen, that none of the usual implements required for successful aggression or resistance should be wanting. The city required not only to be fortified against the innumerable arms with which she knew she would be attacked, but with the means of support for her thick population in case the vigour of her resistance should at any time compel her enemies to abandon the hope of reducing her by storm, and to resort as a last hope to the less satisfactory process of a siege. The threatening aspect of affairs had long, moreover, dried up all the usual sources of the revenue, and extraordinary measures were to be put in force for the purpose of raising such a fund as the extraordinary exigency of the case and times made requisite. All the ordinary forms for the protection, and sometimes for the favour, of the rich were necessarily abrogated ; and when an equal taxation failed to yield the necessary supply, the individuals whom the commissioners indicated as most able to bear such an impost, were called upon again and again to minister to the wants of the republic from those stores, which in her happier days the protection of her equal laws, her justice, and her policy, had enabled them to accumulate ; until at last it became the only duty of these commissioners, in the apportionment of the public burthens, to ascertain the fifty, the hundred, or the two hundred, from whom the republic had the best right to expect a restoration of some of the goods which she had formerly bestowed. Nor was this the only means to which the magistracy considered itself justified, or found itself necessitated, to resort. As the war in which the city was about to be

involved, was peculiarly a war against the head of the ecclesiastical system of Europe, it seemed especially proper, and, as it were, retributive, to draw upon those of the establishment whom circumstances placed within her reach. A large portion of the goods of the church were declared, therefore, to be subject to the exigencies of the state, and were thus accordingly seized for the public use. All the ornaments that ecclesiastical pride had set upon the altar, the fruits of ecclesiastical extortion; all that pious or superstitious devotion had sacrificed to religion or religious fear, was torn from its place, and converted into a means of resistance to the head of the hierarchy; and while these compulsory measures brought a vast increase to the public treasures, the zeal of the *arts* and *corporations* by voluntary contributions swelled them in such a manner as to place the magistracy in perfect security against a possible failure of this means of defence. Unfortunately it was not so easy to make provision in the other particular, no less important to the safety and preservation of the town. Against a siege of any definite length, though it should include all the seasons of the year, the means of resistance on this point might be secured. But the nature of the league was such that the blockade of the city might be deferred for any length of time, for which provision could not be made while all the circumjacent country would naturally be occupied by the enemy. Still, whatever remained to be done, was faithfully and prudently executed by the diligent administration to which was confided the honourable charge of resisting the papal aggression, and of preparing for the last struggle of the last of the *Italian Republics*. The husbandmen were ordered to bring in the fruits of the last harvests, which had been remarkably abundant. While all were intent upon the means of defence, there were many at the head of affairs who still apprehended that the citizens might yet incline to an accord with the

pope ; they urged, therefore, those who were most ardent in the performance of this duty, to acts of violence against such members of the Medicean family as yet remained within their jurisdiction ; and the confusion of the unprotected fields, compelled to pour their produce into the unhappy city, afforded ample opportunity to those who might find a satisfaction for the misfortunes of their country in the injury of the friends of its enemies. The houses and fields of the hated members of this family, and of those who adhered to its interests, were burned and spoiled ; and those whose duty it might be considered to watch that no private wrong should be perpetrated in the public name, rejoiced, perhaps, in secret that the people had thus rendered themselves as obnoxious to the vengeance of the public enemy as they themselves, who, in case of unsuccessful resistance, might seem to be particularly implicated as rebels and ringleaders of rebellion.

As a last measure of preparation, seven commissaries were elected to preside, with little less than dictatorial power, over the destinies of the republic in this her last approaching conflict. The names of these individuals have not been particularly distinguished in the histories of the times ; nor were they of the few who, when all did well, and much was to be done, exalted themselves above the common virtue to obtain a special notice as the defenders of their country and of human liberty. It must, however, be borne in mind, that all who bore a part in the defence of Florence, were raised above the ordinary virtue of men by valour, by patient endurance, and ardent love of liberty ; and that to have been not superior to the humblest of these, was yet, perhaps, to have been superior to the age. We shall therefore give the names of these individuals, inasmuch as it does appear not unworthy the labour, to preserve the memory of all, the least of those who bore a part in the defence of the last republic of Europe. Jacopo Morelli, Zanobi Carnesecche, Anton

Francesco Albizzi, Bernardo di Castiglione, Alfonso Strozzi, Agostini Dini, and Filippo Baroncini, were chosen to this high office of guardians of the public liberty.

When now it became obvious that the danger could not be avoided, the promised services of Hercules of Este were claimed by the Florentines; but the aspect of affairs in the eyes of his father, the duke of Ferrara, did not appear sufficiently flattering to justify the hazard; and, after a long delay, his personal presence was not only refused, but the forces of the imperialists were swollen by the reinforcement of those troops which had been promised to the Florentines.

In the meanwhile the emperor arrived at Genoa, and the magistracy thought it expedient to try yet once again the force of remonstrance, and to endeavour if possible to withdraw him from the league which had been formed for their ruin. To convince him of the injustice of the war to which he lent his soldiers and his name, would have been no difficult matter; but the ruins of Rome bore witness yet that no consideration of right or justice had rule in the councils of Charles. It was in vain, therefore, that Strozzi, Soderini, Girolami, and Capponi, the delegates of Florence, urged the rights of their city and the justice of their cause; nor could they bear to enter again the walls of their native city, which had sent them forth with her last hope to bring back the annunciation of her determined ruin. Strozzi betook himself to Venice, in which city he yet might live under the protection of the republican name, if not of republican laws; Soderini retired to Lucca, and Girolami alone returned, to nerve his fellow-citizens to the last resolve of desperate resistance. Capponi had intended to do the same; to bear a part in the last struggle which he had endeavoured vainly to avert, and to fall in her last hour. He was met, however, on his way at Castelnuovo di Garfagnana, by numbers

of the flying citizens, among whom was Michael Angelo, with tidings of new disasters in the fortunes of the devoted city. The old man had borne his own misfortunes with a patience which had not failed to restore him to his fellow-citizens, who at this their greatest need had again recourse to his prudence and integrity. In the bitterness of his regret he now accused himself of participating in the divisions which had brought this ruin on his country, and falling into a melancholy which threatened his life, and shortly after terminated it, he cried with his last breath, "Alas ! my country, to what have we reduced thee !" Nor had his friends long reason to weep over his loss ; he had grown old in honours, and his death released him from the shame and sorrow of seeing the savage hordes, which, under the prince of Orange, had desolated the cities of the South, now under the guidance of the same leader arrayed against all that he had been accustomed to love and to revere.

If any doubt for a moment existed as to the treatment which Florence was to expect from her enemy in case that he should prove victorious, the eagerness of the unpaid soldiers of Spain, who crowded to participate in the labours of the siege, must have speedily removed it. Many soldiers of the armies which had pillaged the cities of Rome and Milan had been stationed or had settled in those capitals, and from their lawless lives had embroiled themselves with the citizens whom their imperial master's interests would no longer suffer them to treat as public enemies. Such offenders were now handed over to the municipal authorities, and the civil courts were crowded with suitors for indemnity against the private wrongs of these marauders. When, on a sudden, intelligence of the contemplated leaguer of Florence arrived in those places, all who found themselves thus bound, exclaimed that they had now a right to demand their liberation, and insisted now on their part on receiving

indemnity for any loss to be sustained by them in consequence of absence from the storm and the sack. Others, as they came in sight of the walls, exclaimed aloud, "Prepare your goblets of silver and gold, we come to crown them, Florence, with our sabres and pikes," or with other expressions of similar import.

Malatesta Baglioni was still in Perugia, his subject dominion, when the army of the prince of Orange was marshalled on his borders between Foligno and Spello. On the approach of the imperialists the garrison was withdrawn by capitulation to Arezzo, against which the enemy next displayed itself, and which was destined to witness some of the most remarkable achievements of this sanguinary war. Here also it was thought expedient to retire before the opposing force, for the purpose of concentrating the strength of the whole province in the capital. The course and the result of the conflict proved how injudicious were these measures. Florence was sufficiently strong for armed resistance; and had she been able to effect a diversion on the side of her strongest dependencies, and wearied out the enemy in long and fruitless endeavours against them, the war could not have been continued for any great period by the prince of Orange and the imperial generals, with soldiers who clamoured for the spoils of war, and whose avarice would hardly wait upon the tedious issue of so many doubtful sieges and unprofitable fights.

For a long time Florence had been filled with an active and resolute population, breathing the spirit of liberty and anxious for battle. Yet a number of those who did not participate in this spirit, for a while distracted the councils of the city, and sought to weaken the efforts which the more resolute were preparing to make for the common defence. As the prince of Orange approached, the fears of these individuals became more clamorous, until at last they found themselves unable to bear the contempt or hatred of their fellows,

and took the resolution of abandoning their country and passing over to the ranks of its enemies. Among these the historian is almost ashamed to write the name of Guicciardini. Yet this was not the greatest of his offences to his native city with which he sullied the glory of his literary life and labours.

"On the fifth of October, Orange moved from Feghine, but marched so slowly in expectation of the artillery from Siena, which was not far off, that he did not arrive with all his troops and cannon in the plain of Ripoli, two miles from Florence, before the twentieth; and on the twenty-fourth he encamped with all his army on the hills near the fortifications, one part of the troops posting themselves upon the higher grounds that overlooked the city all along from the gate of San Miniato to that of San Giorgio, while another wing extended themselves from over against the gate of San Miniato as far as the road from the gate of San Nicolo."*

The reduction of the places which had yielded to Orange on his way towards the capital, had not dispirited the inhabitants of that city; and the imperialists began to be sensible that without the aid of those forces which Cæsar still kept in the field against the duke of Milan and the Venetians, they might be unable to force the walls of the well-defended place, or even, perhaps, to maintain themselves against the impetuous sallies of the besieged. It became, therefore, an object of primary importance to the pope that Charles should enter into an accord with those powers, and transfer his forces from their dominions to the seat of war in Tuscany. "Though Cæsar had not come into Italy with an inclination to make an agreement with these powers, especially with Francesco, yet meeting with greater difficulties in the course of his affairs than he had imagined in Spain, and finding

* Guicciardini.

it not easy to acquire the state of Milan since the new alliance which Francesco Sforza had made with the Venetians, and further also that he had involved himself in vast expences for maintaining so many troops as he had brought out of Spain and Germany, he abated of his former stiffness. And he was much more pliable, because solicited by his brother to pass into Germany, on account of the tumults of the Lutherans, and of other signs of innovations which appeared in that country, whither it was also probable the Turks would sometime return. For it was very well known that Solyman, when he broke up from Vienna, fired with shame and indignation, had sworn that he would soon return with a much greater force. It appearing also to Cæsar not only unsafe, but hardly honourable, to depart out of Italy and leave things imperfect, he began to incline his mind, not only to make an agreement with the Venetians, but also to pardon Francesco Sforza, for which the pontiff made great instances, being desirous of universal quiet, and that Cæsar finding himself disengaged from other enterprises might turn all his arms against Florence. It took up about a month to debate on the difficulties of an accommodation, which at last was concluded with both on the 23d of December, the pope taking a world of pains about it. As soon as the difficulties, which were under debate, were digested, so as to leave no room to doubt of bringing the agreement to perfection, Cæsar, having removed his troops from the state of the Venetians, sent four thousand German foot, two thousand five hundred Spanish foot, eight hundred Italians, and above three hundred light horse, with twenty-five pieces of artillery, to the war against the Florentines.*

The refusal of Ercole d'Este to assume the command of the Florentines, under authority of the title of captain-general, which they had conferred on him, had

* Guicciardini.

rendered the choice of a successor or substitute necessary. Between Malatesta and Stefano Colonna the Florentines limited their choice ; but the latter considering himself but as a soldier of the French king, and as serving the Florentines only as the officer of an ally, refused to exchange the partial command which in that capacity he exercised, for the more unlimited control with which the magistracy would have invested him. He still, therefore, retained the post which he held as chief of the guard disposed for the protection of the least trusted division of the walls, and abandoned to Malatesta the election which that leader greedily coveted.

As yet the prince of Orange had attempted nothing against the city itself, content with reducing the neighbouring towns and country. The tenth of November was chosen for a first essay ; and as the Florentines were in the habit of celebrating with extraordinary festivities the evening of that day as the vigil of St. Martin, it was expected that a well-concerted surprise might place the city in the hands of the imperialists, and thus determine by a single blow the fate of the war. According to previous arrangements, this attack was made ; but Orange found that the interests of the defence had not been neglected in the festive employments of the day. Along the whole line of the ramparts the cry was called *to arms* ; and though four hundred scaling ladders had been fixed to the walls, the urban guard defended their charge with so much zeal and efficacy, that on no occasion did the enemy obtain possession of the fortifications. An assault of Colonna on the army of the besiegers, made exactly one month afterwards, was more successful. While it was yet in doubt whether the surprise might not result in a total defeat of the enemy, and cause him to withdraw his forces and to raise the siege, the impetuous and ardent citizens were astounded by the trumpet

of Malatesta which sounded a retreat.* Thus ended, by the treachery or jealousy of their military chief, the fairest probability which had yet offered itself to the Florentines of terminating a disastrous and fatal conflict by a single victory. Malatesta had been strenuously opposed to the sally which had proved so fortunate, and it would ill have accorded with his hopes of advantage that a subaltern, by opposition to his counsels, should effect the liberties of a city whose fate had been entrusted to his care. Two days afterwards a further victory, obtained by another leader of the Florentines, the commissary Ferrucci, still more elated the citizens, who now began to entertain increasing hopes of a favourable issue to the perilous contest.

Ferrucci, who bears so conspicuous and honourable a part in the labours of this memorable siege, was altogether one of the most remarkable personages to which the great events of that period gave birth. His family had for many generations been at once respectable and obscure, having given not a single magistrate or even citizen of distinction to the republic, except his grandfather, who in the time of Lorenzo had borne himself with some credit in the wars for the recovery of Pietra, Santa, and Sarzana. He had himself been brought up with his brother Simon to commercial employments; but on the forming of the Black Bands of Giovanni de' Medici, he had attached himself to that troop, and continued with them through all their remarkable career, and in all the vicissitudes of their fortunes. At the period at which we have now arrived he was in the command of the fortress of Eupoli, from whence he had been active in furnishing

* "It happened that, on the night of the eleventh of December, Stefano Colonna, with one thousand harquebusiers, and four hundred between halberds and partisans, all in corselets, and, after the Spanish custom, with their shirts over their arms, attacked the regiment of Sciarra Colonna quartered in the houses near the church of Santa Margherita a Montici, and killed and took a great number without losing a man."—*Guicciardini*.

the capital with supplies of provisions, which permitted them to keep untouched their proper stock. Numerous skirmishes, and more especially the storming and re-taking of San Miniato, had acquired him the love and admiration of his soldiers to such a degree as to inspire them with the belief of absolute invincibility under his guidance. Notwithstanding the dangers presented by the leaguer of the city, the hope of final success in resistance was not so wholly abandoned as to render the high offices of the administration less desired than they had been in the better days of the republic. The term of Carducci's Gonfalonierate was drawing to a close, and the city was divided in the choice of his successor. In spite of all his endeavours, and of claims for faithful services rendered in the difficult moments during which he had directed the government, he did not succeed to have his name inserted among the list of the candidates. A determined hostility, even greater than his own to the Medici and the aristocracy, was made the standard of eligibility; and the choice of the council fell at last upon Raffaele Gerolami, the only one of the delegates to Charles who had returned to the city, and who had signalized his animosity to the cause of Clement since the moment of his return by a bitterness that recommended him beyond every competitor to the sympathy and regard of the citizens.

During all this period the siege was proceeding but slowly. The Florentines, inflamed by the zeal and enthusiasm of the Dominicans, who still adhered to their former opinions and intermingled with spiritual instruction their political doctrines, were wound up to a pitch of resolution bordering upon frenzy. Not satisfied with repulsing daily the attacks of the enemy, they demanded to be led to the assault; and every sally served by partial success to encourage and inflame them to greater daring and more hazardous enterprises. It is pleasing to record the name of a son

of one, who, like Macchiavelli, had but lived for his country, among those most prominent and daring in her defence on this occasion of her last extremity. Ludovico, the son of that great historian and political philosopher, in the sallies of the military and the urban guard, became particularly distinguished by his boldness and address, and deserved no small portion of the glory of an exploit which had nearly resulted in the liberation of the city. Three columns from the city had been designated to commence an attack, according to a concerted plan, along the line of the enemy's encampment. The column under Signorelli had already commenced the engagement, and being seconded by that of Bartolomeo del Monte and Ridolfo di Assisi, had given full occupation to the enemy, when the movement of the third under Amico da Venafrò must have effected his perfect rout. An accident prevented the timely manœuvre which had been so prudently concerted, and the columns already engaged, unable to bear the whole weight of the imperialist force, were compelled to retire. Their withdrawal, however, though it lost the victory, was by no means a defeat; and their entrance into the city with all the order of discipline was hailed as a triumph by the spirited populace. Five thousand citizens, filled with the enthusiasm which so long and so successful a maintenance of this struggle could not fail to engender, met in the cathedral church, and there, having required the magistracy to join in the rite, renewed upon the altar of their religion the solemn vow to hold the walls to the last moment against the public enemy, and to shed the last drop of their blood for the support of the constitution and the liberties of the people. A unanimous and universal ardour possessed the bosoms of all; a few individuals whom fear or the hope of reward was able to win from the general feeling, seemed to the exalted minds of the rest to have stripped off the character of humanity, and to have divested them-

selves of all claim to the sympathy of men engaged in the support of holy a cause, and whom these individuals would have sold with all the sacred interests depending on their persons. No measure of indignation was observed towards the suspected; and in the general execration, those who merely did not share the common hatred of the family for whom Florence was compelled to undergo and suffer so much, were sometimes confused with the more criminal, who did not confine to opinion and sympathy their favour for the outlawed Medici. Those historians who have written the eulogics of the Medici as the history of Florence, have found, therefore, much to object to the Florentines in the cruelty with which offences of this kind were punished by the magistracy; and the fate of the son of the famous Ficino is cited as evidence of their injustice and tyranny. That youth, at a moment when the feelings of the people had been greatly excited by a discovered treachery, had imprudently maintained in public the claims of Cosimo to the title of *Father of his country*. This ill-timed argument was construed into a capital offence against the existing opinions, and the young disputant was condemned to expiate his offence with the loss of his head.

While Florence was thus resolutely defending herself within her walls, her faithful cities, unable to resist the attack of the imperialists, were daily falling into their hands. Pistoja, Prato, Pietra Santa, and Mutrone, had surrendered some time before; San Gimignano had been taken, and Volterra, entrusted to the care of an unskilful governor, had transferred its allegiance. The last hope of the wearied but still determined citizens was now placed on Ferruccio. He had still kept the field, and in almost every engagement had proved an over-match for the best generals of the imperial arms. Abandoning Empoli on receiving news of the defection of Volterra, he undertook to recover it to the republic; nor was it long before the ensigns of

Florence were seen to float again from its battlements. His departure, however, from Empoli was fatal to that place ; the imperialists directed all their force against its walls, which Ferruccio had rendered impregnable. But the constancy of the officer who should have supplied his place, gave way before the numbers with which he was to contend, and Empoli was delivered up by the cowardice or treachery of Andrea Giugni and Piero Orlandini to the troops of Sarmiento and Vitelli. No sooner had this important fortress yielded to the enemy, than the forces which had been detached for its reduction were re-united to the army of Maramaus for the recovery of Volterra. But Ferruccio was a very different antagonist. Sarmiento, the successful leader at Empoli, and many others of the best captains of Cæsar and the pope, were slain before the walls of the well-defended city.*

It is unnecessary to prolong the account of this disastrous siege. Florence had done all that she could do, and more than ought to have been expected ; but she had done it in vain for the preservation of her liberties, though not for the glory of her last hours of freedom. We close the history of this fatal event with an extract from the narration of her great contemporary historian, who witnessed the fall of the gallant republic, and who lived to regret, in infamy and neglect, the part as well which he had not borne in her defence, as that which he afterwards bore in the establishment of the throne of her tyrants. "The dearth of provisions increased in Florence, which no longer received

* "As soon as the marquis del Guasto had taken Empoli, he marched with those troops to join Maramaus in the suburb of Volterra ; and making together six thousand foot, they set about battering the place, and having made a breach of about forty braces, they gave three assaults in vain, with the loss of above four hundred men. They then erected a new battery, and gave a vigorous assault with Italian and Spanish foot mixed together, but were repulsed with greater loss than in the former assault, so that the siege was raised."
—*Guicciardini*.

supplies from any quarter, and yet the obstinacy of the people was not at all diminished ; and Ferruccio being come from Volterra to Pisa, and assembling as many troops as possible, all the hopes of the Florentines rested on his arrival. For they had sent him orders, that by any way, and at all hazards, he should put himself on his march to come to them, designing, as soon as he had joined the troops in Florence, to march out and attack the enemy. In this design the happiness of the success was no greater than the rashness of the resolution had been extraordinary, if those counsels can be called rash which are prompted by the last necessity ; for a passage must be made through hostile countries, in the possession of a very numerous army, though dispersed into many places.

“The prince, having notice of the design, took a part of the army, and, reinforcing it with several bodies of Italian foot, having perhaps, as the Florentines supposed, received private assurances from Malatesta Baglione, with whom he held very close correspondence, that he would not attack the army in his absence, put himself on his march to encounter Ferruccio ; and finding him near Cavinana, in the mountain of Pistoja, which road he had taken in passing from Pisa, on the side of Lucca, out of confidence in the faction of the Cancellieri, which affected popular government, attacked him with a much superior force. Here the prince, performing rather the duty of a private man-at-arms than of a general, rashly pushing himself forwards, was killed ; his troops, however, obtained the victory, in which, among many others, were taken Giampaolo da Ceri, and also Ferruccio, who being thus a prisoner, was killed by Maramaus, out of a spleen, as it was said, conceived against him, when, in the siege of Volterra, he ordered a trumpeter, whom he had sent into the place with a certain message, to be hanged.

“The Florentines, thus abandoned of all divine and

human assistance, and the famine prevailing without any further hopes of relief, yet greater was the obstinacy of those who opposed an agreement. These men, induced by the last desperation not to suffer their own ruin to be unattended with the destruction of their country, and no longer debating whether they or others of the citizens should die to save their country, but willing to have their country perish together with them, were also followed by many, who had an impression on their mind that God would certainly vouchsafe miraculous assistance, but that it would not appear before affairs were reduced to such extremities as to be in a manner quite without resource. And there was danger that the war would end with the utter extermination of that city, because the magistrates, and almost all those who had the public authority in their hands, concurred in this obstinacy, there remaining no room for others, who were of contrary sentiments, to offer any thing in contradiction for fear of the magistrates, and the menaces of arms, if Malatesta Baglione, knowing the case remediless, had not in a manner forced them to agree; induced perhaps merely by pity to see so famous a city wholly ruined by the madness of its citizens, and the disgrace and damage that would result to himself from being present at so great a desolation; but much more, as it is supposed, from the hopes of obtaining leave of the pope, by means of this agreement, to return to Perugia. Wherefore, while the magistracy, and those of hotter spirits, were debating on giving orders to the troops to march out of the city, and engage with the enemy, who were much more numerous, and strongly posted, and Malatesta refused, they grew to such a height of distraction, that they discharged him from his command, and sent some of the most pertinacious among them to give him notice of it, with orders to depart with his troops out of the city. This declaration put him in such a rage, that with a poniard, which he had by his

side, he wounded one of them, and would have killed him, had he not been rescued by the attendants. The others being in a consternation, and the city beginning to rise, those who were not so mad as the rest, repressed the rashness of the Gonfalonier, who armed himself, and threatened sometimes to attack Malatesta, and sometimes to march out and fight the enemy.

“ At last the extreme obstinacy of many gave place to the extreme necessity of all, and therefore on the ninth of August four ambassadors were deputed to Don Ferrando da Gonzaga, who, since the death of the prince, had the chief command of the army, the marquis del Guasto having left the camp long before, and the next day a convention was concluded. The principal articles, besides obliging the city to pay, within a very few days, eighty thousand ducats for removing the army, imported, that the pope and the city should give authority to Cæsar to declare, within three months, what should be the form of government, with a reserve however to liberty: that there should be a general amnesty of all injuries done to the pope, his friends and servants; and that, till the declaration arrived from Cæsar, Malatesta Baglione should remain with two thousand foot for the guard of the city.

“ The agreement being made, while the money was getting ready for paying off the army, for which there was occasion for a much larger sum, the pope not being very forward to assist the city with money in so great an exigency, Bartolomeo Valori, who was the apostolic commissary, concerting measures with Malatesta wholly intent on his return to Perugia, called an assembly of the people in parliament in the Great Square, according to the ancient custom of the city, the magistrates and the rest giving way to it out of fear, and there instituted a new form of government, giving authority by parliament to twelve citizens, adherents to the Medici, to settle the government of the city after their manner, who reduced it to the same

form in which it usually stood before the year one thousand five hundred twenty-seven.”*

The conquest of Florence and the fall of the republic revenged the quarrel of the ancient Ghibelines, and proved, though after a lapse of so many ages, the soundness of their principles and the validity of their objections to the Romish ascendancy in the councils of their nation. A heavy retribution now brought upon the children of those who had been so often triumphant in the papal cause, the full and overpowering burthen of the papal ambition, and crushed the liberty which Guelphs and Ghibelines had jointly established. With this catastrophe the whole Peninsula returned to a condition differing but little from that to which it had been reduced by the barbarian conquests of the earlier ages, and from which the treaty of Constance, A. D. 1183, had liberated it. As then the fate of its cities and people was decided exclusively by the successes of tribes, in whose interests they were not permitted to concern themselves, and whose very language was unintelligible to their ears; so now the shifting policy of the courts of France and Spain and Austria, to say nothing of the inferior continental powers, and of England, determined, with the changes of each varying moment, the fortunes of Italy. The very wrecks of those glorious ages in which her independent states preserved for Europe the vital spark of freedom, serve to show that the best days of Italy were not those of the Roman aristocracy or of imperial luxury, and vindicate for the republics of the middle ages a character as much above that of the ancient Romans in regard to the arts of life, as in the more important points of political wisdom.†

* Guicciardini.

† “However repugnant it may be to our ideas of ancient superiority, yet modern times have seen a building arise, which far eclipses in proportions, and probably in decorations, any which the most flourishing times of Greece and Rome could boast. If we extended the comparison to Babylon or Egyptian Thebes, the balance would

Florence had yet, perhaps, one consolation in her fall. She had resisted while resistance was a virtue, and defended, as far as valour could defend, the sacred charge with which she had been entrusted. The faithlessness of her hired leader had destroyed her hopes, but she yet might boast of her children, and point to them as the strenuous champions of freedom. Nor was this an idle boast of no avail for the future ; since, had her children still continued true to her interests and her fame, the victories of Charles and Clement might have been acquired in vain. Even when the force of arms had wrested from the citizens the government of their choice, we have seen that it was still deemed expedient to trust them at least with the apparent exercise of their former liberty, in the creation of a new constitution ; and, as it has well been observed, the sovereignty of the people was recognised in the very act which was to annihilate that sovereignty forever. The great bell sounded to collect the multitude for this last execution of the functions of majesty, and was then broken by order of the new authorities, to indicate that that multitude was never again to assemble, and that those high attributes were never more to be exercised by a people thus suddenly transformed into a mob. Thus it was evident that even the bayonets of Charles were not sufficient to encourage the timid pontiff to an open assumption of sovereign power in the city which he had conquered by treachery and by arms ; and Florence was still governed, at least in appearance and nominally, by her proper magistrates and laws. From this moment the treason of her own citizens is answerable for her degradation and ruin. To them, or such of them as had been proved and found subservient to the

probably be decidedly against the modern edifice. But as Greece and Rome are the usual standards to which we appeal for objects of grandeur and magnificence, I was anxious to point out the fact, that their utmost efforts had been surpassed by a people who are called their degenerate descendants."—*Burton's Rome.*

interests of Rome, was entrusted the execution of the ecclesiastical vengeance. Poison and the axe were placed at their command, and all who had signalized by their patriotism, evidenced in exploits of valour, in prudence of counsel, or fortitude of resistance, the last hours of the commonwealth and common liberty, were submitted to the eager servility of the new satellites of power. Carducci died by their sentence upon the scaffold; Girolami, of poison administered in the scanty food of a prisoner of state; Benedetto da Fajano, the successor of Savonarola, falling into the hands of Clement, was ordered to be gradually starved to death by the daily diminution of his wretched allowance; and upwards of five hundred citizens, at first condemned to banishment, were driven by a cruel artifice to violate the bounds prescribed, in order that the insatiable thirst of the vindictive prelate and his kinsman might not be denied its feast of blood. The individuals to whom the Medici had entrusted the cares of their interests and their revenge, who thus poured out the blood of Florence's best citizens, condemning to exile in the name of mercy, and ruining by oppressive impositions such as they did not dare to touch in their persons; who disarmed the populace, and hired foreign arms to overawe the few that were not yet subdued; the panders, in a word, to regal pride and ecclesiastical malice, were the historian Guicciardini, Francesco Vettori, Roberto Acciajuoli, and Bartolommeo Valori.

But all the zeal of these unhesitating agents could not satisfy the desires of Clement. He had contracted Alexander to the daughter of Charles, as a step towards his establishment of a throne in Florence; and until he could behold the accomplishment of this his last wish, he seemed to have failed in the object of all his desires, and to have brought in vain upon his native city the horrors of the contest which she had just so honourably, but at the same time so fatally, sustained.

On the 5th of August, however, of the year succeeding that in which the imperialists had entered the city, Alexander de' Medici made his appearance among his destined subjects, when an envoy of the emperor proclaimed to the citizens the will of that imperious master for the new formation of their government. He restored to them their former privileges, it was asserted, on condition that they should recognize his son-in-law as the head of the republic, with hereditary privileges secured to his issue, or, in default thereof, to the other branches of his family ; a condition at once subversive of the institutions which it assumed to restore. These terms accepted, the condition of the state might seem to be secured ; and Clement, indeed, perceived that he could no longer openly exact from its citizens a more perfect recognition of his kinsman's authority as a sovereign prince. His only expedient, therefore, was to gain the Florentines themselves to such a change as should gratify his vanity with a name more princely than that which the proclamation of the emperor had required for his favourite. The ministers whom we have already named, were more than ready instruments to his hand ; but Filippo de' Nerli, another contemporary historian, and, above all, Filippo Strozzi, were solicitous and officious in bringing about the consummation so profoundly desired by the vain ecclesiastic. Filippo Strozzi had formerly distinguished himself as the advocate of popular liberty, and, anxious to obliterate the memory of that opposition to the papal desires, he now surpassed the most abject of his fellows in the furtherance of Clement's wish.

On the 4th of April, 1532, a new assembly, convened by the Balìa under the direction of the super-serviceable agents of the pope and the Medici, proceeded to the reform of the state and city of Florence ; and the act by which this body was convened, as if in anticipation of the arbitrary changes which it was about to introduce, omitted the name of the *people* and of the

republic, which, in all previous modifications of the government and constitution, had been acknowledged as the paramount authority. It was not till the 27th that the new constitution was promulgated, when the citizens were summoned to hear the decree which was to fix their destinies, and which they could not resist. The first important change abolished the office of Gonfalonier of Justice and the college of the Signory, a magistracy which had existed now for the better part of three whole centuries, and had become identified with all the glories of Florence in the eventful history of such a length of years. To this extinction of the commonwealth even in its minute exterior forms, the constituent assembly could add but little which it might not expect the citizens to accept. It declared the prince Alexander, duke of Florence, with a title transmissible lineally and collaterally; establishing thus that power which six generations had been engaged in erecting on the ruins of Florentine liberty. For the assistance of the sovereign, and not for the protection of the people, it instituted a council of Two Hundred, composed by nomination of the duke from all the highest orders of the city, and out of which a chosen number of forty-four should be selected to constitute a senate. The members of these assemblies, like the duke himself, were to hold their offices during life. A special, or, as it were, cabinet council was again elected from the senate; while all the executive power was lodged in the arbitrary will of the duke or of his lieutenant-deputy. Such was the government which the Balia of the Florentine citizens substituted for the constitution of the illustrious republic, and such the officers created to supersede the Signory and the Gonfalonier.

Florence had now submitted herself to an absolute master, without a limit to his power either in regard to the manner of its exercise or the time of its duration. The popular license, of which the wealthier had com-

plained under the republican regimen, might now compare with it the advantages afforded by the despotic rule of an irresponsible tyrant; and Alexander was well calculated to assume the character of such a magistrate. He had received the ensigns of usurped authority by even a less respectable means than the Sforzas of Milan, and the other princes whom popular favour, misguided and seduced, had raised to sovereign rank in Italy. Foreign arms and foreign interests had made him a monarch of reluctant subjects, and rendered requisite, for the maintenance of power thus obtained, the continued presence of the force by which it had been gained. Alexander, not satisfied however with placing a mercenary troop as a guard upon the citizens, insulted them by giving the command of his prætorians to Alexander Vitelli, remarkable as the enemy of republican institutions, and sworn to the hatred of Florence and the Florentines. It may be remembered that the father of this Vitelli had been executed by order of the Signory for his miscarriage in the affair of Pisa.* Nor did this suffice to quiet the fears of the jealous and cowardly tyrant. Availing himself of the law by which the citizens had been disarmed, he declared his resolution to enforce its execution with unceasing care, and to punish, with unmitigated severity, the slightest departure from its injunctions. But while it pleased him thus to play the tyrant with his subjects; a people, who, resigning their liberties and the controul of their own affairs, had entrusted to his care and to his virtue the charge of their interests and happiness, he loaded with privileges the bands which he had introduced to awe the ancient sovereigns of the land into a troubled submission. The license of these troops, protected by the royal favour, soon exasperated even the warmest friends of the prince; and a heavy retribution came upon those, who,

* See page 145.

in the hope of personal advancement, had sacrificed the rights and immunities of their countrymen. Guicciardini, Valori, and Strozzi, not trusted by him who had most profited by their treason to Florence, found themselves postponed to the troops on which their master rested his hopes in case of a popular movement; and the cardinals, who, as dignitaries of the hierarchy, had naturally sided with Clement in the war and crusade against the freedom of Tuscany, now eagerly enlisted on the side of the enemies of Alexander. At the head of this opposition was the second favourite of the pope, the cardinal Hippolito. In the midst of so many enemies, who gratified the vanity of the duke while they excited his secret fears, that prince relied upon his hired soldiers, and endeavoured to bind them faster to his interests by conceding to military license little less than a perfect impunity. Yet even while he trusted to these interested swords, he did not wholly neglect all other means of safety; he erected near the gates an almost impregnable fortress in case of sudden tumult, and a vessel, stationed at the mouth of the Arno, waited his commands to save him by a more ignoble means if the arms of his mercenaries should prove too few, or the walls of his fortress too weak, to sustain the opposition which he might one day expect as a consequence of his unbridled tyranny.

With the exception of the Roman pontiff, Alexander had in his own family (for such we must consider the Medici) scarcely a friend; but Clement seemed indeed to grow to him as his former adherents fell from his side. Thus protected, the bastard prince might scorn the malice of his disappointed friends, or tread with the semblance of contempt upon the remonstrances, complaints, or threats, of his less questionably disinterested enemies. This shield was fortunately destined not to serve him long. Clement had lived, it is true, so long, that now his death could scarcely be of any avail to the interests of his country

or of humanity. But, though too late to benefit Florence, or Italy, or the world, the death of this feeble potentate, unhappily more mischievous in his feebleness than the most ambitious of his predecessors in the strength of their power, might yet occur too early for the safety of the newly established despot of Florence. The terrors of a guilty life, now drawing to a close, if not the remorse of conscience, presaged to the pernicious priest the rapid approach of his last moments. On the 25th of September the violence of disease accomplished the desirable end, and Clement on that day was withdrawn by death from the scene of his iniquity and guilty triumphs.*

CHAPTER VII.

Death of Alexander and Accession of Cosimo.

THE death of Clement, though not an unexpected, was an overwhelming, blow to Alexander, as it left

* "This pope was exalted from a low degree with wonderful felicity to the pontificate, but in it he experienced a great variety of fortune, though, upon the balance, his bad fortune greatly outweighed the good. For what felicity can compare with the infelicity of his imprisonment, his having seen the sackage of Rome with such horrible ravages, and his being the cause of so great a ruin to his own country? He died hated by the court, suspected by the princes, and with the character of being rather of a morose and disagreeable than of a pleasant and affable temper, being reputed avaricious, hardly to be trusted, and naturally averse from doing a kindness. Wherefore, though in his pontificate he created one-and-thirty cardinals, he created not one for his own satisfaction, but, on the contrary, was always in a manner necessitated to it, except the cardinal de' Medici, whom he created rather at the solicitations of others, than of his own spontaneous choice, at a time when he laboured under a dangerous disorder, and if he had died would have left those who belonged to him beggars, and destitute of all relief. He was, however, very grave and circumspect in his actions, much master of himself, and of a very great capacity, if timidity had not frequently corrupted his judgment."—*Guicciardini*.

him exposed to the ambition and dangerous popularity of the cardinal Hippolito. Disappointed in the hopes which he had built upon the supposed preference of the pontiff, this fascinating ecclesiastic now turned himself to nobler thoughts, and hoped to earn upon the gratitude of his fellows a better title to fame than he could have founded on the subversion of their liberties and the establishment of a throne upon their ruins. In this kinsman, therefore, the duke of Florence encountered a powerful antagonist. All the discontented partizans of the Medici flocked to his little court at Rome, and lent themselves with eagerness to the plans maturing for the restoration of the republic through the influence of Hippolito. Conspiracy and secret force had proved too doubtful in the issue, and too generally unsuccessful, even while Florence had yet the protection of her old constitution, to offer now a prospect of success to the malcontents. Finding themselves, moreover, safe in the distance which separated them from the jurisdiction of the tyrant, they resolved to make their hostility at once open and decisive. Three principal citizens were despatched to Charles, to lay before him the grievances of the state, and to entreat that he would not continue his protection to one, who, under the shadow of his favour, had introduced a tyranny more oppressive than any under which the most ill-governed states of Italy had ever been reduced to groan. In conclusion they urged the imperial faith engaged for the performance of the articles of capitulation, on the strength of which the citizens had surrendered themselves to the soldiers and allies of his majesty.

At the moment of the arrival of this deputation, Charles was preparing for his famous expedition against the Moors of Barbary. Amazed, however, at the recital of the enormities which the complainants charged upon Alexander, and shocked at the atrocities from which even his nature revolted, he engaged to

lend a formal hearing to the parties on his return from Africa. The arrival of this moment was anxiously awaited by the banished Florentines, and not less solicitously, though with less open desire, by the people of Florence. Hippolito was chosen to advocate the common cause ; and it is possible, that had he been heard, the fate of this last solemn and desperate appeal might have been widely different. But Alexander had too much at stake to suffer the cause of his adversaries to be argued by so eloquent and popular an advocate. Charles, as he but too well knew, had stipulated for the restoration of the Medici ; but the claims of the cardinal to represent that family were certainly not more feeble than those of the actual representative, while the popular preference, if not the popular favour, made him certainly more proper as a sovereign to reconcile the spirit of a people not yet accustomed to obey, and never well disposed to kingly rule. He trembled, therefore, when Charles declared from Naples that he would determine the disputed question ; but more, when his kinsman, supported by the openly acknowledged favour of the most respectable individuals and families, put himself on the way to advocate the cause of the city before the august and powerful judge, in whose decision was placed irrevocably the destiny of the contending parties. While all who were interested in the settlement of this question, decisive of the fate of liberty within the Alps, the enemies of Alexander, exulting in the almost assured success of Hippolito's advocacy, and his interested partizans trembling for the support of his menaced throne, the sudden death of the cardinal was announced to the wonder or consternation of all who with breathless anxiety had watched the progress of this fraternal dispute. The cardinal had arrived at Itri on the way to Naples from Rome, when the treachery of Alexander overtook him. Often before, the fears of Hippolito's interest with his dissatisfied subjects, had suggested to

the guilty mind of the prince the necessity of freeing himself from so formidable a rival ; and the most illustrious poet of his day, the herald, as it were, of the still greater Ariosto, Francesco Berni, was made to suffer the penalty of a virtue that should have placed him above the dependence of such a prince as Alexander. Enjoying the friendship of Hippolito for his talents and the fame which they had acquired, the poet seemed a proper person to be employed as an instrument of his master's jealousies, and accordingly the duke entrusted to him the design of assassinating his kinsman, and charged him as a dependent with the whole execution. The humble attendant of a court, degraded and stained like that of Alexander by all the crimes that lust and avarice and fear can prompt, would hardly be unprepared for such a proposal ; and it requires even a stretch of credulity to believe that his reluctance and refusal to perform the office proceeded alone from virtuous abhorrence, or from an honest indignation at the attempt to convert his necessary dependence into the service of a hired assassin. He did, however, refuse to participate in the murder ; and the terror of Alexander, who thus unexpectedly found himself at the mercy of his dependent, combined with his displeasure at so unexpected a refusal to seal the fate of his servant no less certainly than that of the first object of his fear and hate. The duke soon after found a readier instrument ; both his victims were despatched to satisfy at once his ambition of a throne, his desire of vengeance, and his thirst of blood. In the same fate were involved the friends of the cardinal, Dante di Castiglione, and Berlinghiero Berlinghieri, strenuous members of the opposition ; but the better fortune of the less deserving Filippo Strozzi saved him from a similar destiny.

The death of Hippolito had not the effect, perhaps, anticipated by his murderer, as the appeal for his removal was not conducted with any diminution of energy, or any inclination towards a compromise.

In all the defections occasioned by the enormities of Alexander's rule, there yet were those whom fear or avarice and the vanity of official dignity still held to his interest; and the warmest advocates of his oppressive government found themselves in many instances, opposed in this dispute to personal friends or the nearer relations of blood. Thus Guicciardini, Acciajuoli, and Bartolommeo Valori, were now to meet as opponents their former colleagues of the Medicean party; and Matteo Strozzi was not ashamed to sustain the pretensions of a prince, whose disregard of female modesty and infamous attempts upon the chastity of a member of that unscrupulous family, had detached from his cause at length the mercenary and selfish Filippo.

When Charles consented to unite his daughter to the favourite of Clement, he committed himself in a great measure to the support of his government and dynasty in spite of all opposition; and when, therefore, this well-grounded hostility arose, and displayed itself in a manner so peremptory and resolved, he found himself in a condition requiring, even from his absolute power, a cautious if not an impartial procedure. While then the graveness of the repeated charges of incapacity against Alexander compelled him at least to the semblance of investigation and reflection, the ministers of his court, deceived by his assumption of the office of judge, and by his protestations of a resolution to decide without affection or favour, declared themselves almost unanimously on the side of the petitioners, and urged the deposition of the feeble and dissolute prince. The emperor still continued to doubt, or at least to wear the appearance of doubt; and Alexander, sinking under the weight of his self-convictions, was about to accomplish the wishes of his enemies by a voluntary abandonment of the dispute, and a clandestine withdrawal from the bar and jurisdiction of his too partial judge. For a single moment the fate of Florence now seemed

again to tremble in an equal scale ; and had the fears of the accused and conscience-stricken tyrant prevailed, that city, though perhaps she never could have gained her former state, or restored to her citizens the government of their days of power and glory, must yet have escaped the degrading rule of the Medici ; a family hateful in their rise and despicable in their end. But Guicciardini had not yet filled the measure of his infamy in the long history of his subservient baseness. He had sustained the party of the bastard favourites of Clement in their rise, and now the contempt of his fellows, which was only not sufficiently strong to extinguish their detestation, rendered the fall of the usurper's throne an event of danger, or pregnant rather with assured destruction to its slave and parasite. He heard, therefore, with consternation the project of his master to abandon the contested field, and leave the city once again in the hands of the people to resume themselves the government, or to exalt to the vacant throne of their sovereignty a family less connected with the causes of their fall from liberty, and less execrable for the meanness of vice and the atrocity of crime. Guicciardini was a wily politician ; he read the heart of Charles, and laid it as an open book before the vacillating prince. To his counsels, therefore, all that Florence was yet to suffer, is to be ascribed ; Alexander remained for the sentence of the emperor ; and in spite of the earnest and substantiated accusations of Nardi, the republican historian of those days of Italy's disgrace and fall, in spite of the prayers and tears of Florence, that sentence confirmed the rule of Alexander, and justified the tyranny with which he had oppressed the subjects submitted to his paternal care. In palliation of this bitter decree, it was ordained that all who had been exiled for opinion's sake, and all whom the caprice of Alexander had held in banishment, should be recalled with full oblivion of the past and perfect security for the future.

It was not for those who had distinguished themselves by an unequalled self-devotion in the last conflict waged by their country, to accept, as an accorded grace, the privilege of returning to her walls ; still less, perhaps, could the more recent and more personal enemies of the now doubly irresponsible autocrat consent, under any assurance of safety, to place themselves within the reach of the eager grasp of his offended vanity and ambition. Many of both these classes, deprived, under the name of confiscation, of their possessions, and destitute of the necessities of life, were labouring under all the afflictions of unexpected want. Unacquainted with poverty, they now found themselves reduced to its severest privations ; but none of the devoted leaders for a moment thought of purchasing the license to return as pardoned culprits to their native city, by the sacrifice of the new and lofty dignity acquired as the last champions of her extinguished rights ; and Charles cannot but have envied the elevation of soul which rejected his degrading boon, and taught him the feebleness of his despotic power. Their reply or remonstrance, for it might be considered in either light, couched in the most resolute terms, began by stating that the appellants had not requested instruction from his imperial majesty as to the manner in which they should obey the duke Alexander, nor yet to implore his forgiveness for having justly laboured to recover and maintain the liberty of their country ; that they had not invoked his aid to return them as slaves to those walls from which they had departed freemen, and for the sake and love of freedom ; nor yet for the preservation of their goods. "*But,*" continued the memorial, "*we have resorted to the foot of your majesty's throne in reliance upon your justice and faith, expecting you to restore us to our country, and our country to that entire and true liberty which the ministers of your authority in your name have engaged to secure to us, and which your truth is therefore pledged to sustain. We know,*

therefore, of no other reply to your majesty's decree, than to assure you that we have resolved to live free, and to die as we have lived ; beseeching your majesty yet once again to rescue our unhappy city from the unjust and cruel yoke which oppresses her."

Whatever effect this honest remonstrance might under other circumstances have produced, the actual need of Charles would not allow him at that moment to forget the statesman in the judge. The war with Francis was about to be renewed in Lombardy ; a dependent in Tuscany, on whom he might rely and whom he might command, became little less than necessary to his success in the impending contest ; and Alexander's unpopularity and absolute dependence upon the imperial arms, combined to render him the fittest and least dangerous individual to whom the emperor could entrust a sovereignty which differed so little from a viceroyalty, and which was to be his great support against the liberals who would flock to the standard of his adversary. He therefore hastened to conclude the long-protracted nuptials of his daughter Margaret of Austria and Alexander de' Medici.

If this unbridled voluptuary had formerly indulged in all the pleasures which despotic power could cover with the shield of impunity and a corrupted heart enjoy, it now appeared that new vices were to be discovered for the sake alone of glutting the morbid appetite of the sickly sensualist. The terrified parents who sought the sanctuary of the cloister and the altar as a last protection for the virtue of their daughters, were awaked from a momentary security to hear their shrieks or witness their disgrace, and to find the altars at which they had been willing to sacrifice the youth of their children converted into a scene of revelry or violence. The principal minister of Alexander's pleasures was his cousin Lorenzino, the eldest of the Medici, out of the line of the reigning prince, and consequently heir presumptive to the ducal throne. He

was descended from Lorenzo, the brother of Cosimo, and son of Giovanni, the founder of the Medicean power, and head of the elder line of his offspring, as Cosimo, the son of Giovanni, had been of the younger. In all the excesses of Alexander, this ready attendant appeared at once the participator, and in most, the minister; nor could the Florentines distinguish between the sovereign and his satellite in the ceaseless debauches at which they sickened with disgust even while they trembled with fear. One recommendation there was, however, of Lorenzino in the eyes of his countrymen, which elevated him above the unredeemable detestation of the duke. A love of letters, and a distinguished success in their cultivation, which seemed indeed incompatible with his career of lewdness and vice, acquired for the son of Gian Francesco a partial respect, and may have appeared at least to indicate a mind not totally perverted and a heart not totally corrupt. Day by day this comparative regard diminished, and exposed the servile minister of courtly vice to a hatred no less deep than that which every heart had long cherished in silence for the ruler of their fortunes and arbiter of their lives. Lorenzino perceived the dangerous ground on which he stood; he would have retreated from the verge of the precipice to which he had carelessly approached, but he had rushed with too headlong an impetuosity to the brink, and too late had discovered the perilous condition, from which there was no longer either safety in boldness or possibility of retreat. Of this he did not become immediately persuaded; and it would almost seem that, though the hour of Florence and her freedom had been suffered to pass, yet that a divine or an ordaining fate had destined the instrument of Alexander's blackest crimes as the instrument also of his fall. The jealous suspicions, indeed, of the prince would hardly have permitted another than Lorenzino to possess himself of the means of offence against his person; and nothing probably, ex-

cept the prompt and unquestioning subserviency of Lorenzino, had recommended him in such a manner to the confidence of the cautious prince.

It is not possible to decide with certainty on the motives of this singular individual in the conduct which has rendered him famous or infamous to all the readers of his country's annals through all the generations of her history. His previous life was a tissue of follies, meanness, and crime; the most striking incident of his life presents him in the exalted character of the most noble Roman, and challenges an admiration for a sacrifice greater than that which Brutus was permitted to offer. Perhaps, however, had the libidinous passions of Alexander been content to spare the family of his kinsman, Lorenzino might never have aspired to become the liberator of his country; and it is more than possible, that the jealousy of female honour, about to be violated in his family, excited first in his bosom that love of liberty, the loss of which he did not feel while the usurper's favour spared the sacred altar of his domestic rights.

Lorenzino was at this time but twenty-two years of age; and if at such an era of his life, awaking from his dream of pleasures, he became acquainted with the nobler end for which he had been endowed with energy of mind and lofty intellect, we may excuse the errors of a youth accustomed to unrestricted license, and fostered by the hand of power in the career of juvenile dissipation. In the midst even of these early excesses, a circumstance occurred, which, though enumerated as one of them by his enemies, may serve to show that even then his mind was not wholly subdued by the influence of an over-indulgence in forbidden pleasures; and that the detestation of tyranny, which afterwards became his boast, and constitutes even now the basis of his fame or the ground of his reproach, was not utterly silent in his breast. His residence in Florence was caused by his banishment from

Rome, in which city he had been guilty of a singular outrage, in breaking from the ancient statues the heads of the emperors and of others which adorned the triumphal arches of the imperial conquerors, Trajan and Constantine.

The mother of this youth, still young herself, had a sister of exceeding beauty, by many years her junior. After a guilty triumph over all the females of inferior rank whose charms had seemed to make them a desirable conquest, the duke Alexander was still dissatisfied, unless the virtue of this fair relative of his friend and minister were also made to yield before his hitherto irresistible addresses. But the wife of Leonardo Ginori was deaf to his insinuations and inexorable to his prayers, till, wounded by her resistance and urged by the difficulty of the achievement, he resolved to trust himself, even in an affair so delicate, to the address of Lorenzino. The proposal did not startle as it might have been expected to do. Alexander found in Lorenzino the same willing servant, and rested secure that he should accomplish this last object of his desire. He was compelled, however, to delay, for a longer term than he had expected, the gratification of his infamous passion. At last his faithful agent appeared with the almost unexpected but welcome intelligence that the long-resisting virtue of the beautiful Ginori had yielded to the merit of her suitor and the zealous intercession of its advocate. Alexander abandoned himself to the fidelity of his friend, and felt now satisfied that he had not imprudently confided to his keeping so jealous a charge. The moment for the accomplishment of their unworthy purpose¹ was fixed, and the house of Lorenzino was appointed for the scene of their guilty triumph, to protect the reputation of the frail but not abandoned wife. In these arrangements there was nothing to excite suspicion, for the house of Lorenzino had often been the chosen scene before of Alexander's dissolute enjoyments; nor when, indeed, the destined

victims of his lewdness had sustained unshaken all his passionate prayers, had those walls been unconscious of the shrieks and groans of violated chastity and virtue yielding to force.

The designated night at length arrived, and Alexander found himself at the appointed hour on the spot which had witnessed so many times his criminal indulgences. He was accompanied, as usual, by his friend, the master of the dwelling. All the day had been spent in revelry, and the night overtook the lover wearied with its pleasing fatigues. He threw himself, therefore, upon the bed, and consigning his sword to the charge of his watchful attendant, abandoned himself to sleep till Lorenzino should arouse him for completion of his long delayed and late accomplished victory. While thus at the mercy of his relative, the smothered indignation of that agent of his crimes at last burst forth for their common destruction. Lorenzino was not a coward, but he had resolved the death of his country's oppressor, if not the regeneration of that country herself. With this resolution he did not choose to venture on his unassisted arm the success of his design; and though not unwilling to bear his part, he was still more resolute to see the full accomplishment of his plot; he did not fear to encounter personal danger, but he knew his own deficiency of physical strength; from which indeed, made manifest in an unimposing stature and a feeble frame, his name had received its diminutive adjunct. But though he had judged it expedient and even necessary to associate with himself some assistant for the execution of his purpose, he did not admit him to the least participation in his intention. He had bound to his interest a certain Michele del Tavolaccino, better known among his countrymen by the appellation of Scoroncolo, a common and convicted bravo, for whom Lorenzino had succeeded in obtaining a pardon, and who had attached himself as a useful retainer from that moment to the

person of his benefactor. When first, therefore, the thought of delivering Florence from her degrading oppression had entered the mind of Lorenzino, he applied to this person, communicating to him only so much of his design as might enable him to assure himself that the services of Scoroncolo might be depended on, and that his arm was ready in the service of his patron against any one on whom it might be necessary to employ it. Before the arrival of Alexander on this fatal evening, the determined conspirator, if so he could be called whose only accomplices were his own counsels and his resolute purpose, had introduced his almost unconscious assistant into a chamber adjoining that which was to be the scene of the intended tragedy. No sooner had he withdrawn the light from the duke's apartment, than he hastened to that in which Scoroncolo had been concealed. It was now necessary to prepare the savage in some measure for the part to be performed. Lorenzino therefore told him, that the enemy with whom he had brought him to deal was then sleeping in the adjoining room; that the lights had been withdrawn, and that the blow must be made sure, because the interests most dear and nearest to him required the death of that individual; but most of all, because his rank and power were such as to render an abortive attempt upon his person inevitable destruction to those by whom it had been devised or made. Nothing daunted, the bravo declared that he was ready, and that he would answer for his aim; that as for the rank of the victim, he was not the less willing and prepared if it should be duke Alexander himself. "You have named him," exclaimed Lorenzino, "it is the duke;" and they entered the chamber of the bed of death. Softly, and almost in the dark, they proceeded towards the side of the apartment to which they were guided by the breathings of the duke, Lorenzino leading the way and Scoroncolo following close upon his steps. "Do you

“sleep, my lord ?” said he, in the act of drawing the curtain of the bed, and following up the interrogatory by a blow with his sword, which from a stronger arm would have proved instantly fatal. The athletic form of the duke, however, resisted the blow. He raised himself on his body, and, grappling with his assailant, rolled confusedly with him on the bed now deluged with blood. His sword had been removed ; and even if he could have obtained possession of it in that moment, the caution of Lorenzino had rendered it useless by fastening it with the belt to the scabbard. In the fury of his unexpected defence, the wounded prince exclaimed aloud for help ; but a just retribution rendered vain his hope. The inmates of that house had been too long accustomed to the cries of the victims of his lust to heed the stifled screams that now issued from the chamber of death. Abandoned, therefore, to a just fate by those whom he had taught to hear unmoved the shrieks of human agony, the wretched sovereign found himself alone in the hands of those whom a double necessity now impelled to his murder, and who had themselves no safety but in his death. For some time the struggle between the wounded prince and his assassin appeared no less uncertain than desperate. In the obscurity and in the confusion of their struggle, it was nearly impossible for Scoroncolo to lend the least assistance to his patron without incurring the imminent danger of mistaking in the blow his person for that of the duke. Seizing at last, however, the feet of the latter, and directing his aim by continuing his hand along the body till he should attain a vital part, he succeeded in striking his dagger into the throat of the unhappy prince, who, then relaxing his hold upon Lorenzino, abandoned himself to death.

Had Lorenzino been able to provide as well for the events to succeed upon the execution of his plan, as for the execution itself, he might have seated himself without obstruction on the ducal throne, or restored to

the city its long lost liberty. For these, however, he appears to have made no preparation, and his only thought, upon despatching the tyrant, was to rescue himself from the possible consequences of the murder. The resolution which he took of abandoning the city, though it may argue little for his prudence, is at least a refutation of the charge of ambition so industriously raised against him by the partizans of the craftier politician who was destined to reap the fruit of his successful adventure.

The body of the murdered prince was left upon the bed on which it had fallen, and the curtains being drawn closely around it, the door was locked, that no one might become aware of the occurrence until Lorenzino should have disposed of himself and made provision for his personal safety. To this end, having supplied himself with all the money which he could command, and related to the steward of his house the transaction of the night, with a charge to divulge it gradually in the morning among those who were known to be the friends of liberty, he departed with Scoroncolo, and took the road to Bologna on his way to Venice, where he had purposed to abide the issue of the revolution which his own act had caused. At Bologna he communicated to Silvestro Aldobrandini, one of the Florentine exiles, the death of Alexander ; but so improbable did such an event appear to his hearer, so impossible, in the manner in which it was related to have occurred, that Lorenzino could not obtain credit from his hearer, and departed from Bologna, leaving Aldobrandini still unwilling to believe. At Venice, Filippo Strozzi was for a long time equally incredulous, until at last, persuaded by the reiterated assurances of Lorenzino, he cast himself about his neck and hailed him as the Brutus of the renovated republic. Such were the sentiments of all the liberal party in regard to the assassination of the duke of Florence ; and such, had that party proved ultimately successful,

would have been the common opinion of Lorenzino, and the admiration with which the memory of his achievement would have been given to posterity. In the first moments of the general confusion which attended the publication of Alexander's death, it was natural that the conduct of the protagonist in the tragedy should be variously considered and variously represented. We know, however, that many of those who were by no means distinguished as political partizans, and who had early manifested a profound disgust for the juvenile excesses of Lorenzino, now changing their views and opinions, united in the popular applause, and acknowledged the ancient Roman in the modern conspirator.*

On the morning after the departure of Lorenzino, the cardinal Cibo, first minister of Alexander, was informed that the duke had been during the whole night absent from his apartments. For some time this information caused but little suspicion, the ordinary indulgences of that prince being too familiar to his ministers. But when the news of Lorenzino's hasty and midnight departure was also rumoured through the city, the crafty prelate began indeed to suspect that something more than usual had occurred, which might possibly give rise to a new condition of affairs in Florence. Apprehensive, however, that should the truth

* The poet Molza, after having publicly reprobated the former conduct of Lorenzino, moved by his performance of this single act, appears to have considered all the past but as a part essential to the lofty character which he now assumed, and to have acknowledged the error of his former judgment. It may be, indeed, that such was the evil of the times as to render the assumption of his former habits necessary to the success of a preconceived design for the liberation of his country. This, however, is hardly supposable. The following is the epigram of Molza commemorating the event, in which allusion is made to the anecdote of the Roman statues mentioned in the text. See page 269.

"Invisum ferro Laurens dum percutit hostem
 Quod premeret patriæ libera colla suæ;
 Te ne hic nunc, inquit, patiar, qui ferre tyrannos
 Vix olim Romæ marmoreos potui?"

of his worst fears be realized and become known to the people, a sudden rising might take place to the subversion of the recently established order of things, he caused it to be reported that Alexander was still reposing, having been engaged in various occupations during the night, while at the same time he secretly despatched a messenger to Alexander Vitelli, requesting him to repair with his soldiers immediately to the city. The whole day passed in this uncertainty, and only in the evening, when he was assured of the advance of Vitelli, did the cardinal venture to enter the dwelling of Lorenzino, and examine the fatal chamber in which the body of the murdered prince still lay, and which was discovered stiffened and swimming in its blood. Upon beholding this spectacle, and finding his suspicions thus dreadfully verified, the cardinal congratulated himself upon the prudence with which he had concealed his fears, and prepared, in the ignorance of the populace, to rivet anew their chains thus suddenly broken.

But while preparations were thus making by the party hostile to liberty, the golden opportunity was being suffered to pass by those who would willingly have sacrificed every personal interest for its restoration. Zeffi, the steward of Lorenzino, had been mindful of his master's instructions, and spread in secret among the enemies of Alexander the tidings of his death. Unfortunately the intimacy of the relatives, and their common reputation for dissipation and duplicity, now operated so as to render extremely suspicious the information of Zeffi; and the confidential manner in which it was communicated, excited in all to whom it was given immediate suspicion of a treachery intended to entrap and to deliver them to the vengeance of the duke. As the rumour continued to gather strength, and as those who rejoiced in the liberation of the city began to discover themselves, and at last to cast off the reserve of fear, they found that they had too late been convinced;

for, just as they believed themselves sufficiently strong to prevail in the city and in the councils against the friends and partizans of the new government, the arrival of Vitelli and his foreign soldiery made manifest that the last chance had abandoned their cause.

Meanwhile the Forty-Eight assembled in the palace of the Mediei, under the presidency of the cardinal Cibo. In this council, formed as it was of those who had come into power under the recent government, and who were dependent upon its maintenance for the continuance of their dignities, though far the greatest part were only intent upon supplying the place of Alexander without the slightest thought of change in the constitution of the state, there yet were some who dared to raise their voices for the republic, and to vindicate the rights of the people as fortune had taken the choice of their sovereign out of the hands of the emperor. While some proposed to elevate the natural son of the late duke to the throne of his father, and others advocated the succession of Cosimo, the son of the illustrious captain of the *Black Bands*, Giovanni de' Medici, the voice of Palla Rueellai was boldly raised for the support of the people and the restoration of the commonwealth. "At least," said he, "let us adopt no resolution while so many illustrious citizens, either exiles or emigrants, who have equal right with us to decide in this matter, are unable to participate in our deliberations." A majority of the senators were manifestly inclined to the opinions of Rueellai; but yet again the civil destiny of Guicciardini, and his associates Acciajuoli, Vettori, and Matteo Strozzi, condemned them unhappily to wrest from their countrymen the illusory hope of political regeneration. The dreadful weight of the public odium, brought upon their heads by their repeated treasons, stood now in terrible prospect before them. They did not dare to contemplate the possible effects of the recovery of their power by the people, and of the ven-

geance of their violated laws ; for them, therefore, there appeared no safety but in the support of the ducal authority ; and the fear of these pernicious counsellors outweighed, with a majority of the senate, the rising love of their primeval liberty and the dictates of a disinterested patriotism. Between the desires and the irresolution of the assembly, it was found impossible to come to any decision ; and Guicciardini succeeded in extorting or persuading a resolve to defer for the space of three days the final action of the council on the important point of adjusting the government.

No sooner had the veteran politician obtained this grant of time, than, convening a more secret meeting of his friends, he set himself about disposing of the general concerns in such a manner as to render a subsequent assembling of the council nugatory for the purpose of deliberation, or, indeed, for any purpose, unless it were to ratify the proceedings of this unprincipled caucus. It was there determined that Cosimo, who had been invited to Florence to take part in the proceedings, should be entrusted with the supreme controul and governance of the state under various restrictions, not intended, indeed, to protect the citizens, but to make the sovereign dependent in a greater degree upon his ministers. Cosimo had spent his life till this period in retirement ; nor had he manifested a disposition to engage in any of the political contests which seemed to offer to the ambitious and enterprising the reasonable promise of a successful career. Inferring from this character of Cosimo the most flattering hopes of tractable tutelage upon his part, and of exercising a perfect controul upon his own, Guicciardini had been mainly instrumental in procuring the election of the unassuming prince.

On the next assembling of the senate, which took place on the 9th of January, 1537, before the day assigned, Vitelli was stationed with his troop around the palace, and disturbed the deliberations within by bois-

terous cries of *Live the Duke and the Medici*. The import of those cries was well understood by the few republicans who had delivered their sentiments in opposition to the continuance of the ducal power. Without resolution to brave the mercenaries, they yet delayed, and hesitated, and refused to resolve, when Vitelli despatched a messenger to bid them hasten, as his soldiers were impatient and would not longer be held in check. To this insidious and contemptuous threat, the senate replied by electing Cosimo with an overwhelming majority.

To fasten the new sovereign upon the people, nothing now was wanted but the imperial sanction, and this was but a short time delayed. On the 21st of June, Ferdinand de Silva, ambassador of Cæsar, produced to the senate a decree of the emperor, bearing date as far back as the 28th of February, in which the race of Piero Francesco de' Medici was forever set aside, and that of Cosimo substituted in its place as legitimately succeeding to the extinct line of Alexander. Such was the election of Cosimo, and such the end of the miserable ambition of Clement for his bastard favourites. For them he had sacrificed the liberty of Florence and the independence of Italy; for them he had restored to the German emperors that supremacy in the Peninsula which it had cost so much blood to shake off in the time of the first Frederic and his greater grandson; for them he had been content to make his name a reproach and a scorn to his countrymen and to posterity; but posterity, indeed, was soon to be revenged. A rebellious subject had undertaken its vengeance, and the empire of the Church, which in its perversion had mingled in the differences of temporal empires, and mingled in them only for the overthrow of all that religion and religious power should protect, now shook before the denunciations of an apostate monk; and the proud prelate, who had brought such ruin on his country for the vanity of the name of pow-

er, was stripped of the best portion of its real prerogatives by the bold resolution and cool intrepidity of Martin Luther.

In spite of the treachery of Guicciardini and his associates, with their ready prostration to the shadow of power, and the imposing aid of the emperor, the exiles did not abandon all hope of being able to overthrow the throne of Cosimo; and Bartolommeo Valori, in connexion with Strozzi, former partizans of the Medici, now lent themselves, with all the eagerness of revenge, to break the sceptre which they had been foremost to place in the hands of him who had but recently wielded it so cruelly and disgracefully. Unfit, however, to contend with the cunning of Cosimo, and suited only to the servile parts which they had been accustomed to enact, these were not the men on whom the friends of civil liberty could safely repose; a well devised manœuvre of the duke completely disconcerted their measures, and left the most authoritative of their party prisoners in the hands of their inexorable enemy. As prisoners of war, and pertaining to those by whom they had been captured, these unfortunates might hope to escape the eager fury of the duke; and those who had fallen into possession of the Spanish soldiery had cause indeed for congratulation. The Italians readily sold their captives to Cosimo, who was willing, by the payment of any sum, to save himself all future apprehension in causing the execution of such of his enemies as he could thus get within his grasp. Nor could the prompt destruction of his enemies suffice to satiate the thirst of vengeance in his soul; while he might have terminated all his fears at once and all their sufferings, he rather chose to lengthen both, and to condemn to execution, day by day, so many only of his victims as might glut his appetite nor yet exhaust his store. For four days the proscription and massacre continued, when the rage of the indignant populace, who seemed to shake with threatening

looks their chains, compelled his yet unsated hunger to forego its savage feast. Among those, however, who had perished, was Nicolo Macchiavelli, a son of the historian, whom the lessons and example of his father had made a republican and a patriot. No less than three of the name of Valori were at the same time offered up as victims to Cosimo's revenge or cruel policy. Bartolommeo himself, the head of the family, was sentenced to suffer on the 20th of August, as if to stifle the public sympathy, and give his death the appearance of an act of public justice—the anniversary of that day upon which, but seven years before, he had delivered his country in chains to the tyranny of the Medici. Filippo Strozzi was still required to fill the measure of Cosimo's triumph. For a long time Vitelli had refused to deliver him up; demanding at the same time for his doubtful protection no inconsiderable tax upon the large possessions of his prisoner. Unable to resist the pressing instances of the duke, the emperor, however, was induced at last to withdraw that protection which Vitelli under his authority had afforded the illustrious citizen. An order was accordingly sent for his exposure to the question. But Strozzi had resolved to atone by his last act for some of the transgressions of the meridian of his life. Apprehensive that the weakness of his nature and the infirmities of age might wring from his lips a charge to implicate his friends, and offer up new sacrifices to the blood-stained throne about to be established by the execrable oppressors of his country, no sooner did he hear of the arrival of the imperial edict, than, fixing his mind on the misfortunes of that country, and connecting them with his own and with the still unextinguishable hope of her future emancipation, in the moment of inflicting a fatal wound upon his person, he exclaimed, *Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor!* Thus did the oppressions of Cosimo convert into patriots the least disinterested of the Florentines, and throw the

least affectionate of the children of Florence again into the bosom of their country.

Liberated in this manner from all fear of his enemies, Cosimo was now in a condition to free himself from the more troublesome, if not more dangerous, burthen of his friends. The scaffold had freed him from the former, and he would not have been sorry to rid himself by that or by any other means, of the oppressive debt by which he felt himself bound to the latter. Those to whom he owed in a great degree his elevation to the ducal throne, were those, of course, to whom he felt himself most bound, and whom first he would naturally desire to remove. Perhaps the cardinal Cibo might claim to have rendered him the most essential service, or, at least, to have performed the most useful part in the contrivances by which the people had been prevented from restoring the popular government on the death of Alexander ; nor was it long before Cosimo found himself in a state to teach the unprincipled ecclesiastic the useful lesson of princely gratitude, by banishing him from the city in which he had hoped to perform so conspicuous a part in the government. Alexander Vitelli too had not only participated largely in conferring upon Cosimo the sovereign power, but he had in that participation manifested a disposition and a power to controul the affairs of the city, which could not be agreeable to the city's new and jealous lord. His removal, therefore, became an object of desire and of primary importance to the duke of his own creating ; and, after a long entreaty, the emperor thought it expedient to grant the prayer of his faithful ally, and to supersede the long-trying leader of the imperial troops. Thus did Cosimo in a second instance pay his debt of gratitude. Guicciardini, Francesco Vettori, Acciajuoli, and Matteo Strozzi, still remained. Detested and despised by their fellow-subjects, they looked to Cosimo, and to that influence which he would allow them to exercise in the state, as a refuge

from the persecution of that contempt and hate which they knew they had merited. But Cosimo had bent his mind upon enjoying the throne and state to which they had exalted him ; nor was it long before they found that, least of all his subjects, would Cosimo allow them to participate in his councils, not to say in his authority. Denied the hard-earned reward of their public treachery one after the other, these illustrious culprits became unable to endure the disappointment of their hopes, and the loss of all that they had promised themselves as a support under the heavy burthen of opprobrium, which they too well knew could only be lightened by that power which could shut the public voice within the lips of the indignant victims of their lust of place. Before the year 1540, the mortification of disgrace had rid the jealous duke of all these troublesome remembrances ; and then, when he recollected that he had no longer a friend, he felt that he had entered upon his reign.

Lorenzino had yet escaped ; but the instant return of Florence to the bondage from which he had vainly desired and endeavoured to deliver her, not only denied him the high reward of glory which he had anticipated, but rendered him an outcast and a proscrip't where he had looked to find himself a hero and a deliverer. For ten years a wanderer over Europe, he found himself compelled to seek an asylum at the courts of those whose prerogatives he had attached, and whose common feelings he had enlisted in a common cause by the assassination of Alexander. Against the price which a public proclamation had put upon his head in Tuscany, Lorenzino could not murmur, nor had he reason to fear its consequences ; but the hired dagger, which was sure to find impunity even in those countries to which the power of Cosimo's proclamation could not reach, and which had offered ostensibly the protection of their laws to all who were willing to reside in quiet and order beneath their influ-

ence—this it was that Lorenzino felt himself compelled to guard against, and against which he had in reality no defence but in his own vigilance and courage. From Venice he removed to Turkey, in which country the resolute murderer of Julian de' Mediei, in the time of the Medici, had sought refuge and security in vain. Uncertain there, and apprehensive of the papal or imperial influence, he betook himself to France, whose monarch was the enemy of all from whom he might anticipate danger. Here, then, he seems for a short time to have believed himself safe; but if the demand of the emperor or the duke were known to be of no avail with the king of France, it was also not to be disguised that the condition of that ill-governed kingdom was most favourable to the commission of private crime; and Lorenzino soon discovered that his life was there in incessant and imminent danger. Once more he returned therefore to Venice; not, most probably, with the hope of safety, but in the belief that there at least less danger was to be encountered among a people who still pretended to retain the republican forms, and boasted the enjoyment of republican laws. Here, indeed, if the sin of Lorenzino had been one to be forgiven, he might hope to escape from the consequences of his attachment, feigned or real as it might be, to the principles of liberty and civil equality. Yet here, in his comparative security, the dagger of Cosimo reached him; he fell, with his uncle Soderini, murdered by order of the duke of Tuscany, at the age of only thirty-two, A. D. 1547, ten years after the death of his victim, the tyrant Alexander.

From the moment of this consummation of Cosimo's eager desires, the history of Florence ceases to offer any thing in illustration of the principle which it was the peculiar object of this brief sketch of her revolutions to elucidate. She offers nothing but the violence of despotism, baseness, and intrigue; distinguishing her story in no wise from that of other nations, whose

history is that of their princes, and whose vicissitudes, though pregnant often with the material of romance, are destitute of instruction for the student of political science. By degrees, and by adherence to the line of conduct and policy by which we have seen him subdue to his rule the city and citizens of Florence, Cosimo succeeded in extending his authority over all the states and cities of Tuscany; Arezzo, which had revolted from the Florentines when the common interests of Tuscany required a union of feeling for the common defence, and had then been flattered by the common enemy with the promise of freedom, was the first against which his resistless ambition directed its aim; Siena, where the last friends of Italian liberty had assembled for the ultimate effort of despair, next fell beneath his arms; till, having nothing left to conquer, nothing to despoil, and nothing to corrupt, he put a final seal to the fate of the republic, by assuming, under authority of the pope, the title of Cosimo I., Grand Duke of Tuscany; consolidating the government of the many cities which by independence had preserved their liberties, and which could only be united by the strong hand of a relentless tyranny. With this event the history of Florence is brought to an end, inasmuch as, from the moment of its occurrence, Florence herself, from an independent nation and a sovereign among nations, becomes but a part of an empire, while her history belongs to that of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. With Cosimo the rule of the Medici commenced in the illustrious city, which for more than three centuries had taught the great lesson of political wisdom to Europe; and in the lapse of but one hundred years, that rule, extolled as it has been by affectation, ignorance, or servility, resulted, under another Cosimo, in the erasure of her name from the catalogue of nations.

APPENDIX.

ALTHOUGH the history of the latter portion of Cosimo's reign, as well as that of his successors, belongs, as has been stated, to the history of the grand dukes of Tuscany and not to that of Florence; yet, as the author thought it might not prove uninteresting to those who have traced with him the origin, decline, and fall of liberty in Tuscany, to witness the progress also of its slavery, he has added to his work the following brief but accurate summary from the history of Florence, which forms a portion of that most voluminous of English compilations, "The Universal History."

"Cosmo's authority being established, he wanted to marry his predecessor's widow; but the emperor, her father, for reasons of state, gave her to the duke of *Parma*, by whom she had the famous *Alexander Farnese*, who succeeded his father. *Cosmo*, therefore, married *Eleanora de Toledo*, daughter to the duke of *Alva*, viceroy of *Naples*, and he ever after persevered in his attachment to the imperialists. A private treaty had been made at *Leghorn* between *Charles* and *Cosmo*, by which the former agreed, upon the reduction of *Sienna*, to give it up to the latter, by way of indemnification for the great expenses which he and the house of *Medici* had been at in the service of the house of *Austria*. *Charles* did not reign long enough to make good his bargain with *Cosmo*; but his son and successor, *Philip II.* punctually performed it the first year of his reign, by resigning to him all his right and title to the *Siennese*, in consideration of the attachment of the house of *Medici* to that of *Austria*, and to indemnify *Cosmo* for the expenses of the war. This rendered him the most powerful prince in *Italy*, and he employed all his force and interest in supporting the house of *Austria*. Amongst other marks of his regard for that family, he instituted the order of the knights of *St. Stephen*. The original design of those knights was to serve against the piratical states of *Barbary*, who, about the year 1554, infested the coasts of *Italy*. *Philip II.* of *Spain*, having, about the year 1562, transferred all the district of *Sienna* to *Cosmo*, excepting that chain of garrisons which is now called *Strada de gli Presidii*, lying upon the coasts of *Tuscany*, the knights of *St. Stephen*, who were by that time a regular institution, were

employed to defend them, and allowed a noble palace and church for their residence at *Pisa*, which they still possess, though the order is now greatly decayed. *Cosmo*, during his life-time, escaped many dangerous conspiracies, which were formed against his life by the *Florentines*, who could not forget that they were once free, and that under him they were slaves with gilded chains. His first wife, already mentioned, was highly serviceable to him at the court of *Spain*, and contributed greatly to the glory of his fortunes; but though he had many children, it cannot be said that he was happy in his progeny.

"The names of two of *Cosmo's* sons were *John* and *Garcias*, or *Garcia*. The former, when young, was made a cardinal, through his father's interest; but never could conciliate to himself the affection or friendship of his brother *Garcia*, who was known to be of a furious vindictive disposition. One day the two brothers, while at hunting, found themselves alone in following the chase, far removed from all their attendants; and *Garcia* took that opportunity of quarrelling with his brother, whom he stabbed to the heart with his dagger. He then rejoined his company, without discovering in his countenance or manner the smallest emotion, as if any thing extraordinary had happened. The cardinal's horse, however, returning without his rider, the company, by tracing back the prints of his hoofs, discovered the place where *John* lay murdered. His body being carried to *Florence*, the grand duke, his father, ordered that the circumstance of his being murdered should be concealed; and gave out, that his son died of an apoplectic fit while he was hunting. He then ordered the dead body to be conveyed into an inner apartment, and sending for *Garcia*, to whose malignant disposition he was no stranger, he taxed him with the murder. The youth denied it at first with great warmth, and in the strongest manner; but being introduced into the room where the body lay, it is said to have bled (very possibly by chance) at his approach. He then threw himself at his father's feet, and confessed the charge. The father, who had resolved on the part he was to act, solemnly desired his son to prepare for death; adding, that he ought to account it a happiness that he was about to lose that life, of which his crime had rendered him unworthy, by no other hand than that of him who gave it. He then plucked out of its sheath the dagger with which *Garcia* had murdered the cardinal, and which still hung by his side, and plunging it into his bosom, he fell dead by his brother's body. This dreadful catastrophe happened in 1562, when the cardinal was no more than eighteen, and *Garcia* fifteen years of age. The father ordered the facts to be concealed; and all, but they from whom it could not be concealed, believed that the two brothers died of a pestilential distemper, which then raged in *Florence*. To give this report authenticity, both bodies were buried with great pomp, and a funeral oration was pronounced over that

of *Garcia*. The tragedy, however, proved fatal to the mother, who was so affected with the death of her two sons, that she survived them but a few days. As to *Cosmo* himself, in all other respects but his family afflictions, he was the most fortunate prince of his age ; and, after living in the greatest glory and happiness, he died in 1574, in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, and the fifty-fifth of his age

"Cosmo, the first great duke, was succeeded by his son *Francis* I. who married *Joanna*, or *Jane*, daughter of the emperor *Ferdinand* I. by whom he had eleven children ; but the males all died young, and the females were incapable of succession. His daughter, *Maria de Medici*, became queen of *France* by marrying *Henry* IV. The misfortunes which befel her, by her disagreement with her son, were in a great measure owing to two *Florentine* favourites, whom she carried with her into *France*, the marshal *d'Ancre* and his wife. Upon the death of the great duchess *Jane*, who was daughter, sister, aunt, and niece to emperors, *Francis* fell in love with a *Venetian* lady of the house of *Capello*, who was the widow of a gentleman of the house of *Salviati*. Having declared his intention to marry her, the senate, out of regard to her father's family, declared her the daughter of their republic, and made her a present of a ducal crown. *Francis* lived nine years with this lady, who is celebrated for her beauty ; but little of importance happened to *Florence*, or to *Tuscany*, under his government. He died in 1587, and was succeeded by his brother *Ferdinand* I. who was a cardinal ; but resigned his hat when he was fifty-two years of age. He married the princess *Christina*, daughter to *Charles* II. duke of *Lorraine*. He had by her almost as numerous a progeny as his brother ; but only two of his sons survived him, of whom the elder, *Cosmo*, was his successor ; and the younger, *Charles*, came to the highest preferments in the church. The most distinguished occurrence in the reign of *Ferdinand* was the vast magnificence with which he celebrated the nuptials between his niece *Mary* and the *French* king in 1600, who had sent him a procuration for that purpose. No expenses were spared on this occasion ; and the representation of one comedy is said to have cost him sixty thousand crowns. He died in the year 1609, and was succeeded by his son *Cosmo* II. who married *Magdalen* of *Austria*, sister to the emperor *Ferdinand* II. By her he had three daughters, and four sons ; of whom the eldest, *Ferdinand*, succeeded him ; and the two next were cardinals. *Cosmo* II. was succeeded by *Ferdinand* II. who was a prince of a more active disposition than any of his three immediate predecessors. The disputes about the succession to *Mantua* reviving, he interposed with his uncle the emperor *Ferdinand* II. and procured the suspension of the ban of the empire, which was about to have been pronounced against the duke of *Nevers*, who had strong pretensions upon that succession in right

of blood. He married *Victoire de la Rovere*, daughter to the last duke of *Urbino*, by whom he had two sons, *Cosmo III.* and *Francis Maria*, afterwards a cardinal, and died in the year 1670.

"*Cosmo III.* in the year 1661, married *Margaret Louisa* of *Orleans*, daughter to *Gaston* duke of *Orleans*, brother to *Lewis XIII.* Alliances with the court of *France*, which was at that time in the height of its splendour, were courted by all the inferior *Roman catholic* princes in *Europe*, as it entitled them to the friendship of the house of *Bourbon*. *Cosmo*, however, could not have made a more unfortunate match, as a husband : he was entirely under the direction of his mother, the grand duchess dowager, one of the most severe and austere ladies in *Italy* ; while, on the other hand, her daughter-in-law, having been bred up in all the gaiety and licentiousness of the *French* court, and attended by a numerous retinue of servants of the same cast, paid very little regard to the remonstrances of her mother-in-law upon the levity of her behaviour ; and even presumed, upon the greatness of her birth, to give law to the duke her husband. There seems, however, to have been nothing criminal in the conduct of the young grand duchess, but her disagreement with the manners of her husband and her mother-in-law, which had spread the gloom of devotion and formality over all the *Florentine* court. She resembled him, however, in one particular, that she encouraged men of sense and genius. While she was at *Florence*, she heard that the famous abbot *Siri*, who was a monk of *St. Benedict*, in the abbey of *St. George* at *Venice*, had been banished that city, on a strict prosecution, only for having spoken slightly of the republic. The abbot, repairing to *Florence*, was presented to the grand duchess, and she recommended him to his most christian majesty, who made him his historiographer. But her love of learning, however, could not procure agreement between her husband and her, they being, in other respects, directly the reverse of each other in temper and disposition. The great duchess dowager, continuing still to have the ascendancy over her son, persuaded him to interpose his authority, to prevail with his wife to conform herself to the *Italian* manners ; but neither love nor authority made any impression upon the duchess : and though she had brought the duke two sons, *Ferdinand* and *John Gaston*, and a princess, *Mary Magdalen*, afterwards married to *John William* of *Neubourg*, elector *Palatine*, daily quarrels happened between her and the great duke ; till, at last, they separated, and she returned to *Paris*, where she was allowed an appointment agreeable to her rank, and which she enjoyed to the day of her death. Though this separation gave disgust to the pride of his most christian majesty, yet he had at that time political reasons for not resenting it otherwise than by sending instructions to the marquis *du Pré*, his ambassador at *Florence*, to apply to the great duke, and to endeavour to effect a reconciliation, as also to insist upon

three points. The first was, that the grand duke should, by inviting her to return to *Florence*, take back his wife; the second, that he should pay her debts, which, it seems, she had contracted to a large amount; and thirdly, that, when she should return, she should have the same power in the management of public affairs that the duke allowed to his mother. *Cosmo* answered, with great firmness, that, as to the first request, he was ready at any time to receive his wife, if she should please to return to him; but that her separating from him being entirely the result of her own choice, and without his participation, he would make no advances towards inviting her to return. As to the second article, he answered, that, while she lived with him, he had always maintained her according to her birth and station; and that, since their separation, he had ordered her appointments to be punctually paid her, and therefore did not think himself obliged to discharge those debts which she had contracted through extravagance and want of economy. As to the last article, he said, that, as soon as his wife had given as strong proofs of her attachment to his interest as his mother had done, she should enjoy the same authority in public affairs.

"The marquis endeavoured to shake *Cosmo's* resolution on those heads, by proposing, on the part of his master, another match between his eldest son and another princess of the blood of *France*, in order to renew the good correspondence between his crown and the house of *Medici*; but the duke, who was heartily disgusted with *French* princesses, civilly declined the honour of the alliance, under pretence that his son was too young to think of marrying. Notwithstanding this, the young prince soon after married the princess *Violante Beatrice* of *Bavaria*, a family that was then entirely in the imperial interest, the elector himself being that very year general of the emperor's army upon the *Upper Rhine*; and prince *Clement* of *Bavaria*, his brother, who had been chosen the year before elector to *Cologne*, having rejected all terms of accommodation with his most Christian majesty. The match of the grand prince into the house of *Bavaria*, together with the league of *Augsbourg*, in which *Cosmo* became a party, discouraged his most Christian majesty from any farther advances towards the court of *Florence*; and in the year 1697, when the reputation of the *French* monarchy and arms began to decline, his eldest son having no issue, he married, on the 2d of *July*, his second son *John Gaston*, who succeeded him, to the princess *Anna Maria Francisca* of *Saxe-Lawenbourg*, widow of *Philip William* count palatine of the *Rhine*. This lady, besides the splendour of her birth, had great pretensions to her father's dominions, and was, in her own right, actually possessed of a vast fortune. Her father, *Julius Francis* of *Saxe-Lawenbourg*, had died September 29, 1699; but his succession was disputed with his daughter by the houses of *Saxony* and *Amhalt Brunswick*;

the first, in right of a reciprocal family compact between the elector of *Saxony* and the last duke; and the latter, in right of blood and alliances; while both pretended that a female descendant was incapable of succeeding to that duchy. *John Gaston* brought the affair before the imperial courts of judicature, and took a journey to *Germany*, where he not only carried on the process, but managed the great estates that fell to his wife in *Bohemia*, by the indisputed rights of heritage from her father. As to the law process, several precedents were produced, to prove that the estates in question were inheritable by women as well as men; but the forms of the imperial courts retarding the decision, he returned, after a long stay in *Germany*, to *Florence*.

"Neither of the two sons of *Cosmo III.* having male issue, and there being but little probability of their having any, the great duke's brother, *Francis Maria* of *Medici*, being of a vigorous constitution, some years after was applied to by the court of *Vienna* to resign the purple, to which he had been raised by pope *Innocent XI.* in 1686, to qualify himself for marriage. It was generally thought that the imperial court would have bestowed upon him one of the archduchess's daughters, sister to the emperor *Joseph*; and it is certain, that the house of *Medici* was so much in favour at the court of *Vienna*, that, in the year 1699, the reigning great duke of *Tuscany* obtained from the emperor the title of *Royal Highness*, the same having been before conferred on the duke of *Lorraine*.

"*Cosmo III.* in his own person, kept up the greatest shew of devotion of any prince in *Europe*. In his court and attendance his economy was next to parsimonious; but he repaired every night to the church of the *Annonciata* in *Florence*, and assisted at the litanies, which were there sung with the best music in *Italy*. He was at great pains to bring religious persons to his court, and to recommend them to the pope, who generally bestowed upon them some ecclesiastical preferment.

"Every one knows, or has heard of the holy handkerchief, which is preserved in the church of *St. Peter* at *Rome*, and which is said to be impressed with the picture of our Saviour's face, as he was going to his crucifixion. The veneration in which this relic is held is such, that when it is exposed, which is only on very solemn occasions, the people can behold it only at a great distance, and none have the privilege of exhibiting it but the canons of *St. Peter's*. *Cosmo*, however, was smitten with so extravagant a fit of devotion, that he employed all his interest with his holiness to have a nearer view of, and to touch, the handkerchief; but was informed, that he could not be gratified, because of the anathemas and fulminations that lie against every man who shall mount the tribunal of the holy relics, or presume to touch them, unless he is a canon of *St. Peter's*: he was even told by his holiness, that it was an indulgence the pontifical power itself could not grant.

After great consultation, however, his holiness fell upon an expedient that gratified his friend in his darling passion. The grand duke being then a widower, the pope ordained and declared him a canon of *St. Peter's*; and his royal highness, in a purple habit, and a surplice on his shoulders, having assisted at the brief which declared him a priest, was conducted to the tribunal, where he had the pleasure of touching and handling the holy handkerchief, with the other relics; and he bestowed his benediction, at the same time, upon seventy thousand spectators then present. But this was not the only piece of religious foppery that his royal highness was guilty of on this occasion. Upon his holiness presenting him with a few toys and relics, the duke gave two hundred pistoles to the bearers, and sent the pope presents to the amount of a large sum in jewels and money. Happening to pray before an altar in a church where his holiness arrived, he crawled upon his knees to the pontifical chair; and when the pope desired him to rise, "Permit," said he, "the grand duke of *Tuscany* to adore the vicar of *Christ* with that veneration which is due to him."

"His royal highness, however, during his residence at *Rome*, went only by the name of count *Pitigliano*, which exposed him sometimes to unforeseen adventures. While he was one day on his knees in church, a lady, whose husband had been banished out of *Tuscany*, placed herself by him, and applied to him, as count *Pitigliano*, for his good offices with the great duke to repeal the sentence of her husband's banishment, which he very obligingly promised her. At another time a courtesan threw herself at his feet, and, pretending to be penitent, the great duke gave her five hundred crowns to enable her to enter into a monastery.

"Upon the death of the king of *Spain*, and the succession of the duke of *Anjou* to that crown, the grand duke of *Tuscany* secretly resolved to take part with *France*; but so as to give no umbrage, if possible, to the imperialists. The remaining history of the life of *Cosmo III.* relates only to his private affairs.

"By the great economy he observed in his court and palace he had amassed so much money, that he was looked upon to be the richest prince in christendom; but his parsimony subjected him to many affronts from the *Florentines*, who did not fail sometimes to reproach him with the original meanness of his family: his friends, however, excused him, on account of his being obliged to maintain a court for his son, and another for his brother, and because of the vast sums he expended upon learning and learned men. When young he had made a visit to the *English* court, in the reign of *Charles II.*; but though he always professed a great friendship for the family of *Stuart*, yet we do not find that he was very liberal in contributing towards the efforts made for replacing king *James* on the throne of *Great Britain*, though often

applied to for that purpose by the cardinal *d'Este*, and the other friends of that family; nay, by the pope himself, for whom he had so great a veneration. He affected, however, to be the head and patron of all the *Roman Catholics* in *Great Britain*; and he exerted all his interest with foreign courts in their service. Being a complete politician, his success in this was incredible; and it was primarily owing to him that the Papists met with such indulgences as they did, even after the accession of *George I.* to the crown of *Great Britain*. His great study was chemistry; and his friends could not oblige him more than by sending for medicines prepared in his laboratory by himself. He entertained at his court the best physicians he could find, and they were consulted all over *Europe*; and being courted by all the *European* princes in his time, he may be said to have been in every respect happy, but in the melancholy prospect of his son, from whom he had no hopes of issue, being the last of his family. This consideration rendered him indifferent as to all the stipulations preceding the quadruple alliance in 1718, by the fifth article of which, the duchies of *Tuscany*, *Parma*, and *Placentia*, were to be accounted for ever as male fiefs of the empire, and were to descend, in default of male heirs, to the queen of *Spain's* eldest son.

"Cosmo III. did not long survive this destination of his dominions, for he died the most aged prince in christendom in 1723. He was succeeded by his son *Gaston*, whose character and manner of life greatly resembled that of his father. In the year 1731 the great duke, who had conceived an invincible aversion to the house of *Austria*, together with his sister, not only ratified all the stipulations with regard to the succession of his dominions, but in consequence of this new treaty, *Don Carlos* was invited to *Florence*, there to be educated. Even the emperor at last agreed to the introduction of *Spanish* troops into the duchy of *Tuscany*; and this secured the succession of *Don Carlos*. It is certain, however, that her Catholic majesty, by this time, had projected the conquest of *Naples* and *Sicily* for her eldest son.

"The great duke of *Tuscany*, while those matters were in agitation, was so much decayed in person and intellects, that he took little or no concern in them; and did not even make any remonstrances against the imperial court, who ordered a body of troops to move towards his dominions, in the beginning of the winter of 1736, to oblige the *Spaniards* to evacuate his dominions, which they accordingly did. He died in *July* 1737, and the duke of *Lorrain* immediately took possession of his dominions. The queen of *Spain*, notwithstanding her eldest son was then king of *Naples* and *Sicily*, could not bear the thoughts of so noble an acquisition as that of the great duchy of *Tuscany* being torn from her family, and endeavoured to engage, but without any effect, the court of *Great Britain* to assist her in recovering it for her son the duke of *Parma*, by offering to engage her husband to

relinquish all pretensions to *Gibraltar* and *Port-mahon*; and to give the *British* nation satisfaction with regard to the *American* differences subsisting between its government and *Spain*.

"But as no power in *Europe* could be jealous of that duke being master of *Tuscany*, and as such an engagement might have occasioned a fresh war, her proposal was rejected by the *British* court. Since the accession of the duke of *Lorrain*, now emperor of *Germany*, to the great duchy of *Tuscany*, the *Florentines* have made no figure in the affairs of *Italy*; but the court of *Vienno* has taken some steps towards rendering it, in time, a very comfortable appenage for the younger branches of the *Lorrain*, or rather the *Austrian* family. In the year 1753 it was resolved, that for the future the entire military force of the great duchy, should consist of only three regiments of foot, and one of dragoons of five hundred men. To support this establishment, a *French* company offered to farm the revenues of the duchy. But his imperial majesty rejected the proposal, and fixed upon another company, composed of his own subjects, to manage the revenues under the direction of M. *Richard*, a gentleman of *Lorrain*. By this new institution, the finances of the duchy were divided into twenty shares, one half of which his imperial majesty reserved to himself. By those, and other frugal measures, the emperor was enabled to erect a college for the improvement of agriculture at *Florence*; a science to which the *Florentines* are peculiarly adapted; and in the year 1755, he raised another regiment of dragoons, and regimented his militia. The duchy is now governed by a council of regency, a military board, and other officers of state, who have made many excellent regulations, by which, during the war now raging in *Germany*, his imperial majesty has been enabled to draw many useful recruits from the grand duchy of *Tuscany*, which have done him great service in his armies."

It is considered unnecessary to append an **ERRATA** to these volumes, the errors being for the most part such as the reader will naturally correct. In a few instances, however, and especially in the first volume, some mistakes have occurred, which arose in the correcting of the Proofs: as in page 110, line 7; page 113, line 20; and page 265, line 26; where the words *its*, *it*, and *her*, should have been *her*, *they*, and *their*. The reader will easily perceive the manner in which these inaccuracies have arisen; and it is believed that they occur in very few instances other than those specified above.





